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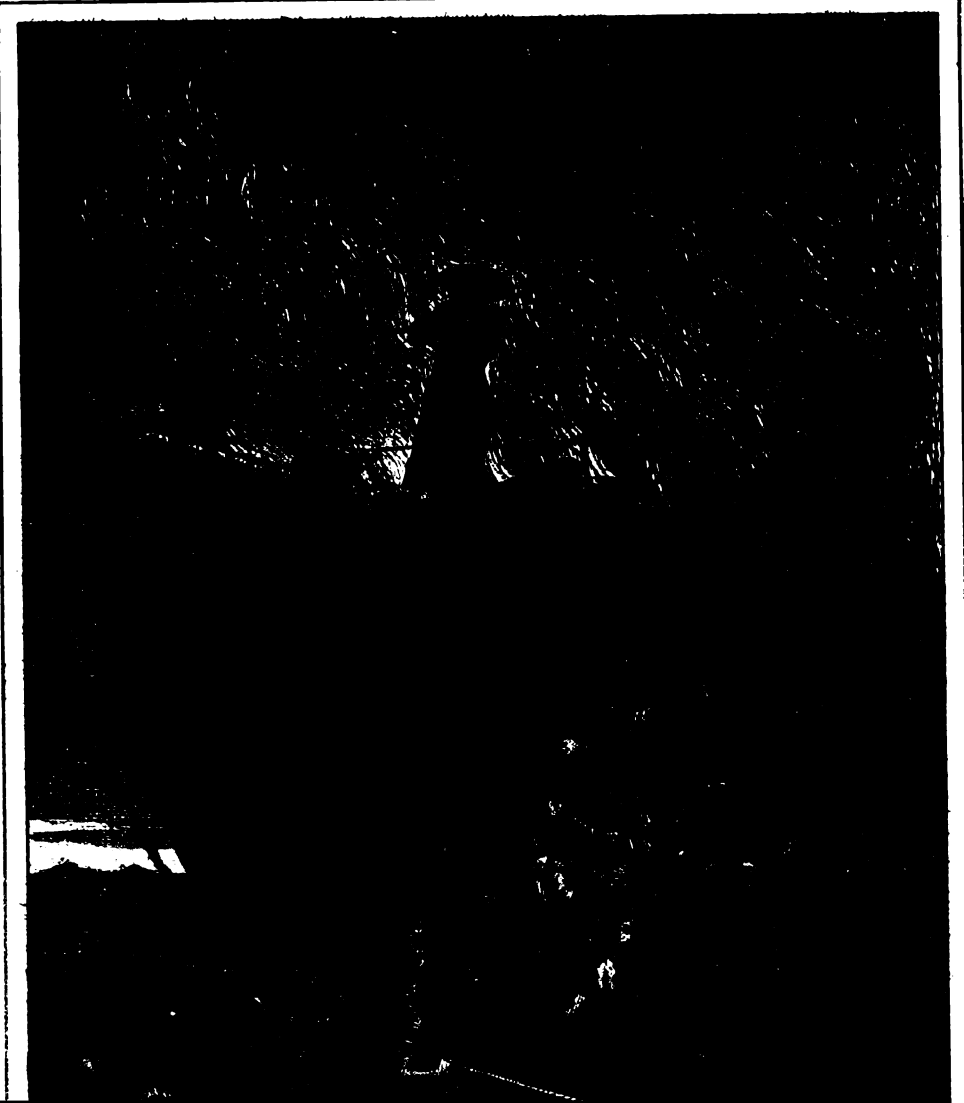

Myrtle and Cypress

Annette Calthrop

FATHER FRANCISCO LEFT ON THE BURNING SHIP

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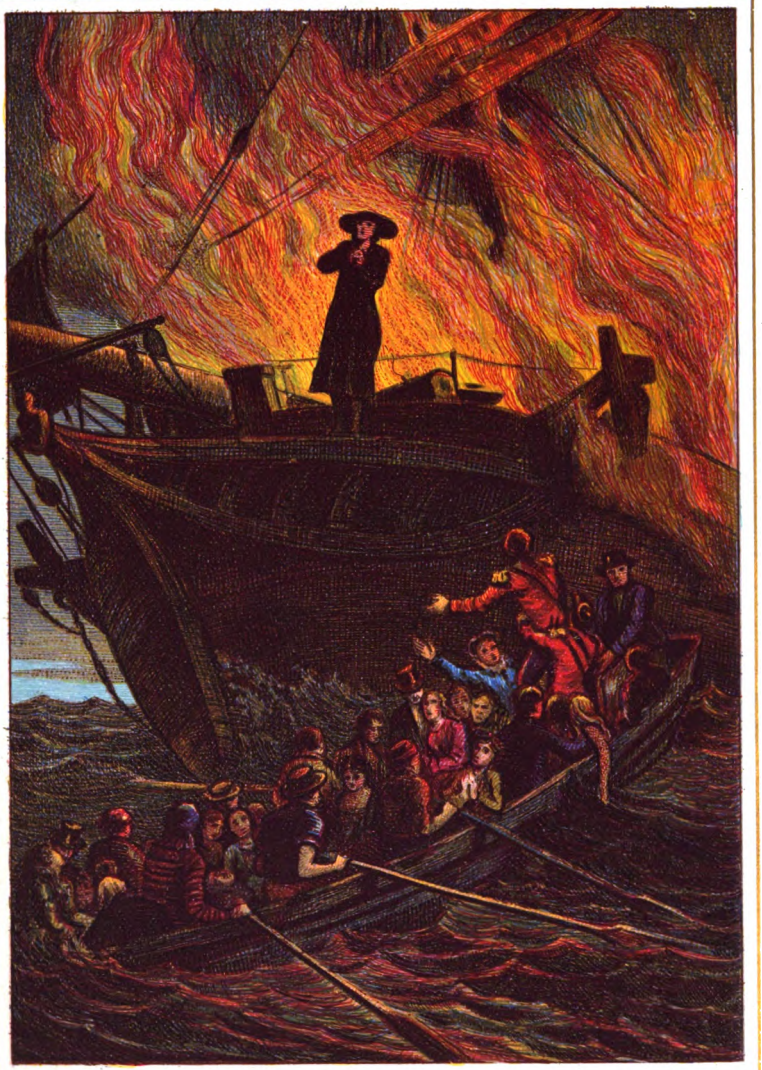

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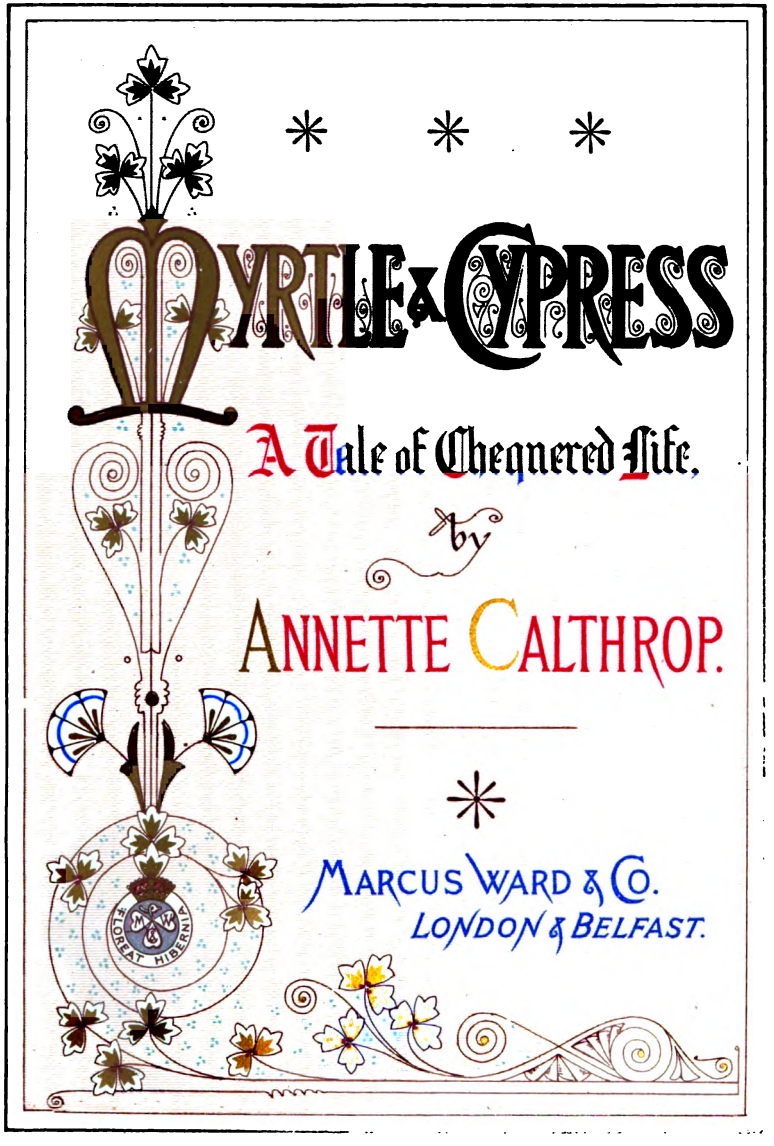

MYRTLE & CYPRESS

A Tale of Chequered Life.

by

ANNETTE CALTHROP.

MARCUS WARD & CO.
LONDON & BELFAST.

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MYRTLE AND CYPRESS

A Tale of Chequered Life

BY

ANNETTE CALTHROP

London:
MARCUS WARD & CO., 67, CHANDOS STREET
AND ROYAL ULSTER WORKS, BELFAST
1876

251. c. 284.

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I Dedicate

THIS LITTLE BOOK,

WITH MUCH AFFECTION,

TO

EMMA EDMONDS,

DEAREST, KINDEST, BEST OF COUSINS,

AND OF FRIENDS.

Annette Calthrop.

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MYRTLE AND CYPRESS.

CHAP. I.—SOME OF THE CHARACTERS INTRODUCED.

VERY great lady in Rome, at the time in which my story opens, was the Marchesa del Palmello. Her name was well known throughout the length and breadth of the Eternal City. A member of a noble family of great antiquity, she had allied herself, by marriage, with a family equally noble, equally illustrious. She had been a beauty in her youth; now, middle age was creeping upon her. But she was beautiful still, and proudly conscious of her beauty. Her bearing was most graceful; her manners full of queenly dignity.

My story bears date the year 1814. It was evening in early December. A gay party had assembled in the

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house of the Marchesa del Palmello. Large rooms, brilliantly lighted, were filled with the *élite* of Rome. Here were Roman princesses, blazing with diamonds; foreign ambassadors—German, French, English, Russian; travellers from all lands, who came in troops to Rome in this happy year, when peace at last reigned in Europe; red-robed cardinals; bishops and *monsignori* of the Church, and numerous guests of lesser degree.

Troublesome times had, as all the world knows, recently passed over Europe. Napoleon's wars had devastated many a home in France, in England, in Italy, Spain, Germany, Russia—where not? Rome had suffered. The Pope, driven from his capital, had been replaced as sovereign by a child—Napoleon's little son, who, at his birth, was hailed King of Rome. In the Eternal City the Pope's partisans had long been chronically furious or sulky. Cardinals had refused to don their scarlet robes, scarlet being the colour which speaks of a triumphant Church.

But this dreary state of things was over. The Pope had returned to his city, and reigned in the Vatican. Napoleon was a prisoner, holding a sham court, in Elba. Cardinals brought to light again their brilliant costumes. There was rejoicing in Rome. Acclamations of the populace had welcomed back the Head of the Church. Festivities, evening receptions, balls were of frequent occurrence.

Lounging in a corner beside a window, stood the marchesa's only son, Antonio by name. He was a young man, and was dressed in the gay scarlet uniform of the Papal Noble Guard. His father, the marchesa's husband, had left Rome a few days previously to visit some poorly-

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managed property of his own in the neighbourhood of Ostia. Antonio was host of the evening.

His duties as host he performed negligently enough, but with a careless grace not devoid of charm. He was wonderfully handsome. His figure was tall and straight; his face was bronzed by fiery southern suns; he had glorious dark eyes, and thick clustering red-brown hair. Not one of the many young nobles of Rome could bear comparison with Antonio, in the matter of looks at least.

Near him was seated a young lady, Lina von Podewils, of whom we shall hear much in the course of our story. Her mother was Italian, her father Prussian. She was not really beautiful, but her appearance was attractive, nevertheless. A proud face hers, with great grey eyes, which looked, in spite of their accustomed coldness, as if they could flash with furious fire at times Her hair was of a rich brown, her skin dark and clear.

She was, to tell the truth, very angry; not that one particle of anger was visible in her face, but her restless hands, which toyed incessantly with her fan, told a tale of suppressed vexation. She had received much attention; young Roman nobles had crowded round her chair; cardinals and monsignori had addressed her courteously; ladies had not been wanting in civility—the marchesa especially had been politeness itself; and Lina's betrothed, a young Prussian officer, by name Karl Kaiserling, had scarcely left her side. But she was utterly dissatisfied with her evening, nevertheless.

We will be frank, and confess at once the cause of her indignation. Antonio had hardly once spoken to her. Lina von Podewils was betrothed to Karl Kaiserling; but her heart, her whole passionately-loving heart, was given

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to Antonio. Poor child! her betrothal took place years ago. She believed herself, in those old days, devoted to Karl. She had never seen Antonio then.

The marchesa, wandering through her rooms, racked her brain to find conversation to suit each one of her guests. She was just a little displeased with her son, who gave her no assistance at all, who leaned back in his corner, looking, through an open window, upon the quiet night, and barely opened his mouth to be civil to anyone. But her displeasure was only slight. Her son was her hero, her darling, the one only being in the world to whose wishes she had accustomed herself to submit her own.

The marchesa's eyes fell on a young Swiss priest, to whom she had as yet spoken no word. She advanced at once, and laid her hand familiarly upon his arm.

"You are grave to-night, Father Francesco."

The priest raised his eyes—great melancholy dark eyes—which had in them a strangely-wistful look. His face was one which, once seen, could hardly be forgotten—a pale, refined face, with clearly-cut features. It was the expression of the countenance which haunted one. There was there a look of mental suffering silently endured, of keen feeling subdued and kept under. The mouth was sternly set.

He answered, breaking silence evidently with an effort; but spoke in a tone of forced gaiety.

The marchesa lingered a few minutes, conversing with the priest. She talked of the health of the "Holy Father"—talked of the coming Christmas ceremonies—talked of gifts of flowers which she hoped to make to Father Fran-

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cesco for the Christmas decorations of his church—talked always on subjects which she thought would interest the priest. He was an immense favourite of hers.

"You will give us some music to-night, will you not?" asked Father Francesco, as the marchesa at length moved away.

"Oh yes. I have just sent for Mademoiselle Tonais, my children's musical governess. She sings divinely, as you know; and I will ask her to do her best to-night. Here she comes!"

Through the crowded rooms, never looking to the right or to the left, came quietly a young girl. With downcast eyes she moved along, passing a knot of cardinals, who looked inquiringly up as she walked by, making her way through a crowd of young men stationed in the doorway; then, just bowing to Father Francesco, who moved aside to give her room, she took her seat beside a piano. Her colour came and went quickly, as she bent over the keys. The priest leaned forward, and whispered a few kind words of encouragement.

The girl was very pretty, with a soft, timid, gentle prettiness, which went at once to the heart. She was dressed in mourning. Her bright fair hair was brushed smoothly back from her face. Her head was not bent so low but that one might see that her features were beautiful and regular. Her eyes, which she raised for one moment gratefully to the priest's, were soft and grey.

The girl's name is Virginie Tonais. She is French. Her father was a Protestant pastor, of Normandy. Ailing health caused him, some years before his death, to seek the warm climate of Italy; now he rests under the shadow

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of the sombre cypresses, in the Strangers' Cemetery, "where Papal Rome suffers her Protestant sojourners to lay their dead." He was a Protestant of Protestants—a true descendant of the Huguenots of old; fiercely, uncompromisingly a Protestant, he had hated the Roman Church with a passionate hatred.

His daughter lived on in Rome, after his death. Madame von Podewils, Lina's mother, was touched by the forlorn condition of the fatherless and motherless girl. She took Virginie to her own home. There the girl remained some weeks. At last she entered, as musical governess, the household of the Marchesa del Palmello. The marchesa gave her as pupils two young sisters of Antonio's. They were aged respectively ten and twelve years. Virginie had been with them about fifteen months.

From his corner in the distant window Antonio saw Virginie enter. His eyes brightened; the idle, listless look passed from his face; he deserted his post, and in a moment was at Virginie's side.

Antonio del Palmello cared nothing for Lina von Podewils; he was passionately in love with Virginie Tonais. A few days before, he had made Virginie a formal offer of his hand; he expected his answer that night; the girl had begged for time for consideration. There was, however, one serious obstacle, of which we shall hear presently, which stood in the way of Antonio's marriage with Virginie.

Lina von Podewils frowned as Antonio passed her; her jealous eyes followed him to the piano; then she turned sharply on her companion, Karl Kaiserling, who was whispering loving words into her ear.

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"You don't give me a minute's peace, Karl," she said, pettishly. "Can't you see that I am tired, and disinclined to talk. But you are blind, I really believe."

Karl looked up, astonished to hear the angry tones of his darling's voice. He was a patient, loving, stupid fellow, not over bright of intellect, but warm, and strong, and true of heart. He grew silent.

Meanwhile Antonio, with a short nod to the priest, drew forward a chair. He sat down, and bent his head low, close to Virginie's.

"You've come at last!" he said, in a soft voice, and in ready, fluent French. "I've been looking for you the whole evening, and wondering whether you meant to remain all night in that melancholy room of yours upstairs. What will you sing?"

The girl answered only by striking a few chords on the piano.

Conversation suddenly grew fainter. People would not leave off talking altogether, but they were polite enough to speak in subdued tones. At length a voice, sweet and touching beyond compare, was heard singing the first notes of a plaintive French song. Instantly there was profound silence. The voice trembled a little at first, but strengthened as the song proceeded.

When the last note had died away, there was a general buzz of admiration. Madame von Podewils approached, and laid her hand approvingly on the girl's shoulder. A high and mighty cardinal—no less a person, in fact, than fat, pompous old Cardinal Mardi, an intimate friend of the Pope—came forward, and said a few complimentary words. Everyone was in raptures.

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Antonio gave Virginie his arm, and led her to his favourite post by the window.

"Won't you sit here? The cool air is delicious. Let me wrap this shawl round you, and then you won't take any harm. I don't praise your singing. It's far beyond all praise."

The marchesa made her way to Lina von Podewils, with a request that she too would sing.

Lina did not sing, but she could play—play superbly; and she was resolved that she would play to-night. Was it for nothing that she had studied music for many years at Leipsic, famous for its musical conservatory? She walked proudly and alone to the piano, disdaining the offer of Karl's arm. "Antonio shall see," she said fiercely to herself, "that Virginie Tonais is not the only woman with a gift for music."

She began, softly touching the notes with light, skilful hand. A tender, mournful strain was heard.

Tears gathered in Karl's blue eyes. He was a true German, with a German's soul for music.

Lina watched Antonio as she played. He never moved, never even turned his head towards the player.

In the low, wailing notes of the music, it seemed to Lina that she spoke to Antonio, and to him alone. She entreated him, implored him, poured out her whole soul to him. He neither looked up nor stirred.

Then the strain changed. A merry tune succeeded. Lina's eyes were still on Antonio; but the gay music was powerless to allure him.

A martial air, magnificently triumphant, filled the air now. Chord succeeded chord in grand harmony.

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But Antonio did not heed, positively did not hear. He had moved from the window to a balcony. He looked down on the quiet town, wrapped in slumber—on the calm, sweet night. Beside him was Virginie Tonais, the being whom he loved best in the wide world.

Abruptly the music ceased. Lina let her hands fall, with a sudden crash, upon the notes. Angry discord answered her. She rose. "Take me to my mother, Karl," she said. "I must go home. Hush! Don't ask me to play another note. I am ill."

"Dear Virginie," Antonio was saying, as he took her hand in his, and bent his handsome face down to her own; "you cannot possibly have forgotten that the day has come, on which you owe me an answer to the question which I asked you just a week ago. You were to have a week for consideration, you know. I have tried to wait patiently through the time."

Tighter Virginie's hand was pressed in a close, warm grasp.

"A week ago I asked whether one day you would be my wife. I ask you again, now. I pray you to accept my love, the devotion of my whole life. You know well—you cannot but know—that all my heart, all my thoughts, all my hopes are yours. You will give me my answer now? It is 'yes.' It must be 'yes.' In all my dreams—bright, glorious dreams—your answer has been always 'yes.'"

The hot blood dyed the young man's face. All the fire of his intense southern nature shone in his eyes.

Virginie gently drew her hand from his. She answered in a grave voice—

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"Hush, Antonio! Hush, dear friend! It grieves me to hear your loving words."

"Why?"

"Because — because" — the girl's voice sank to a whisper—"because my answer is 'no.'"

Fiercely Antonio turned. "Why is it 'no'?"

"For a thousand reasons."

"Give me one."

"I do not love you."

"Virginie, why not?" Once more Antonio's hand sought Virginie's—timidly this time. "I love you so entirely, so supremely, that, by the very strength of my affection, I dreamed that I could compel your own. Can you never love me, darling?"

A sad, sad look crept into Virginie's eyes. At last she said softly—

"You know well—no one better—that there is another reason which must for ever prevent us—which would for ever prevent us, even if I loved you devotedly, as you desire—from becoming man and wife."

"My appointment! I will resign it."

"And ruin your prospects for life! Do you dream that I would allow you to do that, Antonio? My week for reflection has been ill spent if, after it has gone by, I can countenance that sacrifice."

"My prospects!" Antonio raised Virginie's face to his own; looked long into her eyes. "Do not mock me, Virginie. What are my prospects without you?—a lonely, loveless, cheerless life. A glorious prospect, truly!"

Again there was silence. Virginie stood mute by Antonio's side, her hands clasped, her eyes upon the ground.

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A dark cloud gathered over Antonio's face.

The appointment which the young man threatened to resign, was his appointment in the Pope's service. He was officer in the Noble Guard, whose special duty it was to protect the person of the Pope. Now members of this guard are forbidden to marry Protestants; their wives, if wives they have, must be true daughters of the Catholic Church.

And Virginie — the Protestant Virginie — spoke the simple truth, when she declared that a departure from the Pope's service would be detrimental to all Antonio's prospects for life.

Antonio was the first to speak again.

"Father Francesco told me," he said, "that he had had a long talk with you on the claims of our own Church. He thought—he hoped—that in time there might come a thrice-happy day, when you would become one of us—would cast off your faith for ours. Then no obstacle would stand in the way of our marriage, except—except—nay, we will not speak of your want of love for me. I would teach you to love me, Virginie."

A faint colour rose to Virginie's cheeks at the mention of the priest's name.

"Father Francesco did talk long with me," she said; "he talked kindly and eloquently. I answered I know not how, nor what. My thoughts were far away. Of what do you imagine that I was thinking, Antonio?"

"I cannot tell."

"Thinking of a quiet grave in the Strangers' Cemetery—thinking of a grand old man who is resting there—thinking of the day when he sank gently to his last sleep, urging

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me, with his latest breath, to keep the pure faith of my fathers."

That Virginie spoke of her dead father, the French Protestant pastor, Antonio knew well. He sighed wearily. What was this fatal difference of faith which threatened to divide him, for ever, from his darling? Moodily he leaned over the balcony, looking into the street below. The mighty dome of St. Peter's, the cathedral of Christendom, stood proudly out before him. He wished idly, as he gazed on its majesty, that he had never looked upon it in his life—never seen this solemn old Rome—this city given up to priests and churchmen; he wished that his hopes of worldly advancement had never been based on the favour of the Church; he wished idly that his eyes had first opened in the little village, in Normandy, where Virginie was born—wished that he had learned her simple faith—that he had grown up with her from boyhood, making it the aim of his life to win and to deserve her love.

He turned to speak to her now, and found that she had vanished.

The guests were going. The marchesa, weary with her evening's exertions, yet allowed no shade of weariness to show itself in the voice in which she bade her friends adieu.

Antonio made his way silently through the crowd; he bowed right and left, as he passed along. He hurried to his room, in the worst of humours.

It was a calm, still night. The moon shone serenely down on Antonio's handsome, frowning face.

The moon looked on Virginie too, who was kneeling

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in her own little room; her face, all stained with tears, was buried in her hands. But a few minutes ago, she had denied the existence, in her heart, of any love for Antonio. What meant the words which fell from her lips now?

"My love! my love! Would that, for thy dear sake, I could bring myself to learn thy faith—to be in all things as thou art. I am forbidden by the dead."

The moon shone on Karl Kaiserling, as he stood at the window of a chamber, which he occupied, in the house of Lina's mother. He was perfectly happy. Lina had said no further word of her illness; her ill-temper seemed to Karl to have passed away; she smiled kindly on him as she wished him good night.

Meanwhile, Lina was restlessly pacing up and down her room. Her proud face wore no trace of tears. No lament came from her set lips.

But in her heart was one exceeding bitter cry—"Antonio!"

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CHAP. II.—A CHRISTMAS IN ROME.

FATHER FRANCESCO was priest of a small church in Rome. He had held the appointment since his ordination, some four years ago. Father Francesco was born among the mountains of Switzerland; there he spent all his boyhood; in early manhood he came to Rome.

His church stood in a dirty little back street, near the Via Margutta. In this Via Margutta—a narrow street of tall houses—was his lodging.

No one, in his sober senses, could call the Via Margutta a pleasant street. A damp atmosphere hangs about the place. The sun seldom enters it. The street is given over to ostlers, laundresses, and artists. Foot pavement it has none. Unsavoury smells abound. Stables line the street; above these stables, laundresses have their abodes—clothes' lines dangle perpetually from their windows; above the laundresses' domains are studios.

The Via Margutta has one redeeming feature. On one side of the street, some of the back windows of the houses command a cheerful view. The much-frequented Pincian Hill runs up behind the Via Margutta. The Pincian Hill is the fashionable drive and promenade. It answers to the English Hyde Park. Here, on fine afternoons in the winter, one sees many and many an

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English face; the harsh English tongue is heard almost as much as Italian. One might fancy oneself in England, were it not for the marvellous view of St. Peter's, and of all Rome, seen from the Pincian Hill.

Father Francesco's lodging was, as we have said, in the Via Margutta. He was, I believe, the only priest who lived in the street. The situation suited him very well, on account of its nearness to his church. But he had hired his two rooms chiefly to oblige a friend of his, a German sculptor. This friend had himself taken the rooms, in addition to a large studio—taken them in a fit of extravagance, with which his worldly means little corresponded. He soon found that his bargain hampered him.

Then Father Francesco came forward and relieved him.

The rooms were reached by a flight of stone steps, upon which all the inhabitants of the house saw fit to throw refuse vegetables and dirt of all sorts. Roman staircases, common to many lodgers, baffle description. In the hall—a wide stone hall, for the house had, in bygone days, been a splendid one—a cobbler had his stall. Implements of his trade strewed the floor; one stumbled over boots and shoes on one's way to the staircase.

No one dreamed of objecting to the dirt or disorder of the place. Great Roman ladies, holding their dainty skirts, picked their way up the filthy steps, to inspect pictures or statues of artist-friends. Old Cardinal Mardi sailed up, in his floating scarlet robes, to call on Father Francesco. Great dignitaries of the Church thought highly of the young priest, and cultivated his friendship.

The days had gone by since the Marchesa del Palmello's reception. It was Christmas Eve.

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At four o'clock, in the early morning, Father Francesco woke. He rose at once.

To a small, poorly-furnished sitting-room, opening out from his still smaller and poorer bedroom, he betook himself. By the light of a feeble rushlight, he sat down to write; and, till a clock outside struck one quarter before six, he wrote on unceasingly, seldom raising his eyes from his work. Above him, on the room wall, hung an ebony crucifix, a dying Christ.

When the clock struck, Father Francesco got up and stretched himself. He had been correcting a theological essay of his own, an essay shortly to be published, for the use of the "Roman College for the Propagation of the Faith." Closely argued, carefully worded was the essay. Father Francesco looked worn and weary with his work, when at last he laid down his pen. Then, taking his hat, he made his way from his house to the street, and thence to his church. A monotonously tinkling bell warned him that the time had come for six o'clock early mass.

Father Francesco said mass. An old man strayed in, and knelt for a few minutes in the church; then came a young peasant woman, who remained rather longer; last of all, two children made their way in, and stared in a vague, awed manner, at the high altar and the lighted candles; other worshippers there were none. But the priest went through the office in a slow, solemn voice; a sleepy-looking acolyte, in a dirty surplice, by his side. The two figures flitted mysteriously round the altar in the dimly-lighted church.

Mass said, Father Francesco returned to his house. He prepared for himself a cup of coffee, and cut a slice

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of hard, brown bread. Of this fare, he made his breakfast. Then he wrote again, till nine o'clock. At nine, he went out, visited sick people, looked into a school, and otherwise employed himself till noon, when he dined. After dinner he went again to his church, and assisted in the erection of a "presepio."

The meaning of the word "presepio" is literally a "manger;" but it is used in the Roman Church to signify a representation of the Saviour's birth.

A small chapel in Father Francesco's church was used every Christmas for a presepio. Painted figures of Joseph and Mary stood always in the foreground. There, too, was a wooden doll, representing the Divine Child. Shepherds and kings knelt in adoration, while in the distance were seen green pasture-lands, where flocks were tended. The scene was poorly and rudely represented, but crowds thronged and pressed around it, murmuring words of reverent admiration, during the days of Christmas-tide.

Until half-past one o'clock, Father Francesco assisted in the arrangement of the presepio, then he left what little work remained to be done, to his sacristan and two eager young acolytes. He had determined to take a long walk before the vesper service, which, in winter, was held at half-past three. He would so tire himself as to secure sound sleep that night, he thought. To tell the truth, a great sorrow was weighing on his heart; he allowed himself no leisure to ponder over his trouble, but strove, by dint of active employment, to drive it from his thoughts.

To the wild Campagna he directed his way, passing over the ground with quick, resolute footsteps. His hands

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were tightly pressed together; his pale, grave face was a shade paler, a shade graver than usual that day.

Father Francesco was a young man, and had been priest only four years. With intense joy and pride he had entered on his sacred calling, believing that the world had no allurements for him—that his beloved Church was all in all.

Now he knew—knew with bitter pain and self-upbraiding—that a love forbidden to a priest of the Catholic Church, an utterly hopeless, but a passionate and mighty love, was in his heart.

Resolutely he sought to conquer this love, and to win back for his Church the undivided affection which once he gave it.

Along the dreary Campagna he hurried rapidly, as though running a race against time. He bared his head, loosened his long black gown, and let the keen wind which swept across the Campagna blow upon him as it would. And, standing alone, unseen, under the wide sky, he lifted his head to heaven, and prayed one wildly importunate prayer.

At last he turned and retraced his steps. The clock had hardly struck three when he entered the church again. A white look, of weariness, was on his face.

He made his way to the presepio, crossed himself, and knelt. Then rising, he laid his hand gently on the shoulder of a little acolyte, and said a few kind words in praise of some last touches which the boy had given to the arrangement of the presepio.

"You see that heap of evergreens near the high altar?" continued the priest. "Bring them into the sacristy; I

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will there weave them into a cross for the wall beside the pulpit. A lady has promised to bring me some rare berries to twine among the leaves. I expect her here in a few minutes; and you shall hang the cross above the pulpit before vespers."

The lady who had promised the berries was the Marchesa del Palmello. Her governess, Virginie Tonais, was even then on her way to bring them, on behalf of the marchesa, to the church.

As Virginie passed through the streets, she saw, walking together, three persons, whom she stopped to greet. The three persons were Lina von Podewils, Karl Kaiserling, and Karl's young brother, Franz. Concerning this trio, we will pause to say a few words.

Karl Kaiserling and his brother Franz were orphans. They were nephews, on the mother's side, of Lina von Podewils' father. Thus Karl and Lina were cousins. A dispensation from the Pope sanctioned the betrothal of the cousins, otherwise marriage between persons so nearly related would, by the rules of the Roman Church, be illegal. All the members of both families were Romanists. Karl and Franz, after the death of their parents, made their home with their aunt, Madame von Podewils. Formerly they all lived in Prussia: there it was that Karl and Lina became engaged. Upon the death of her Prussian husband, Madame von Podewils came, with her daughter, to her own country, Italy. Franz, a sickly, deformed lad, accompamed her. Karl joined them whenever he could obtain leave from his regiment. But he saw much active service in the Prussian wars against Napoleon.

When. in the first days of her orphanhood, Virginie

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Tonais was prevailed on to pass some weeks in Madame von Podewils' house, she became familiarly acquainted with most of the inmates of that house. Karl was there in those days, on sick leave. Him Virginie learned at once to regard as a friend. No one could ever look into Karl's steady, blue eyes, and refuse to trust him.

For Franz, Virginie felt a warm, pitying affection; his bodily weakness, his crippled figure, woke her compassion. For his brother Karl, Franz's love was wonderfully, pathetically strong. Naturally fretful and suspicious, the boy's very nature seemed, in Karl's presence, to change. Franz worshipped his brother with unfaltering hero-worship.

Among the members of Madame von Podewils' household, Lina alone failed to inspire Virginie with feelings of affection. Hard as Virginie strove to cultivate Lina's friendship, she strove in vain. Always politeness itself, but always coldness itself, Lina's manner forbade any advances towards intimate acquaintance.

The trio stopped short when they saw Virginie approaching. She came up quickly, and shook hands, as well as her load of berries would allow her. "I am bound for Father Francesco's church," she said.

"So are we. Lina takes us there, to listen to Father Francesco's sermon. He is to preach to-night, you know; and he is the grandest preacher in all Rome. For some time Lina was undecided whether we should attend the Church of the Ara Coeli, to see there the presepio which contains the miraculous Bambino, or whether we should allow our minds to be wrought upon by Father Francesco's eloquence. The sermon carried the day."

It was Karl who spoke.

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All at once, Lina stopped before the open door of a large house. "I have changed my mind," she said; "I shall not attend any service to-night. I have a friend here, to whom I will pay a visit. Adieu, Karl; we shall meet later this evening. Adieu, Mademoiselle Tonais."

Lina entered the house.

"One moment," Karl called after her, while a pained, astonished look crossed his face. "May I not accompany you?"

"Certainly not," and Lina disappeared.

Karl stood for some minutes, looking wistfully up the staircase which Lina mounted; then he turned, and walked on beside Franz and Virginie; he wondered what sudden idea it was which changed Lina's plans for the evening. His face lost its smiles; he looked bewildered and sad.

Franz looked indignant.

"I am very sorry," Karl said at last, in his frank voice, "to lose Lina's companionship to-night. I have so few days left to spend with her in Rome, that I cannot bear her to be out of my sight for an hour now."

"Few days left to pass in Rome! What do you mean, Karl?" asked Virginie.

"Have you not heard? I am ordered back to Prussia. My application for extension of leave is refused. I must join my regiment in a week."

Virginie almost let her berries drop, in her surprise; she laid one hand gently on Karl's shoulder.

"Indeed, no, I had not heard. How grieved I shall be to lose you, Karl."

"Shall you?" Karl coloured with pleasure. He lifted his eyes gratefully to Virginie's face.

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"How could I be otherwise than grieved? Have I so many friends in Rome that I can afford to lose the kindest of them all?"

Here Franz took Virginie's hand, approvingly; he pressed it in his own. His eyes were full of tears—the prospect of his brother's departure filled him with untold pain.

"I am grieved to go," Karl answered, quietly; "but I have no choice in the matter. Look you, Virginie; I am leaving behind me my best love—leaving her, perhaps, for ever. The spring will soon be here. With the spring, Napoleon has promised to re-appear in France; and, in spite of his imprisonment in Elba, there are thousands of Frenchmen who believe his word. If war again awake in Europe, I must not shrink from my share in it. But——" Karl glanced towards Franz, and meeting the wildly sorrowful look of the boy's face, changed his tone to a lighter one.

"I leave Lina to your care, Virginie. I ask you to watch over her in my absence"

Before Virginie could reply, Franz said quickly, almost fiercely—

"Leave Lina to me; I will watch over her for you, Karl."

Father Francesco's church was now reached. Karl lifted the heavy leathern curtain which hung before the door. Virginie passed in. Then Karl, twining his arm in his brother's, walked to a seat in the church.

Virginie made her way at once through the church to the sacristy, where Father Francesco sat making his evergreen cross.

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"I have brought the berries which the marchesa promised, father."

The priest rose, with a hurried greeting, and relieved his visitor of her load.

Then, without further ceremony, he resumed his seat, and at once proceeded to turn his gift to use, skilfully twisting clusters of bright berries among the dark-green leaves of his cross.

"The cross is for the church, father?"

"Yes."

The answer came in a cold, constrained voice, and the priest's head was bent low over his task.

There was silence. At last the priest raised his eyes.

"You will hear vespers this evening, Virginie?"

Virginie hesitated. Her Protestantism was strong as ever; no arguments had tempted her to join the faith almost universally professed in Rome. But she was anxious, nevertheless, to hear Father Francesco's sermon. She pondered a moment, then answered slowly, "Yes."

Then with a few parting words, to which the priest replied with a murmured blessing, the girl passed out of the sacristy, and walked to a distant corner of the church.

Father Francesco rose, and stood to see the last of her retreating figure. Then he sighed wearily; his hands fell idly among his leaves and berries; he forgot his work, forgot everything—save Virginie.

It was Virginie—the Protestant Virginie—who had awakened in Father Francesco's heart the love against which he struggled so fiercely. And it was Virginie—the Protestant Virginie—for whom Father Francesco had been entreated to use all his powers of persuasion and

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argument, that she, being led to the faith which Antonio held, might be enabled to become Antonio's wife.

"Father," said a timid voice, "it is all but time for vespers. Is the cross finished? May I hang it up now?"

Father Francesco, looking up with a start, saw the little acolyte to whom he had spoken some minutes before. He gave a few hurried touches to the cross, and laid it in the boy's hand.

Soon the vespers—the evening office of the Catholic Church—began. No need to describe the service. It bore no single point of difference from vespers held in Catholic churches of France, our own country, the whole Catholic world. The office commenced by the usual procession, from the sacristy to the choir, of cross-bearer, acolytes, assistants, and priest. In silence all knelt.

Then Father Francesco, rising, led, in clear musical voice, the chaunt, "*Deus in adjutorium meum intende.*" The choir took up the responses.

It is but very rarely in Rome that one hears, except in the cathedral churches, a well-conducted musical service. But in Father Francesco's church the singing was good; he had himself instructed his choir.

Only half understanding, Virginie listened to long Latin psalms. At last the "Vesper Hymn" commenced. This hymn is variable. Being Christmas, the hymn which Father Francesco had selected was the noble one commencing, "*Jesu, Redemptor omnium.*" Very grandly it was sung. Virginie, a keen lover of music, joined heartily in the song—a song which, translated into her mother tongue, she had often heard in her own Normandy Protestant church.

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The vesper hymn over, Father Francesco moved to the altar, and offered incense; then burst forth the Virgin's hymn of praise, the "Magnificat," in Latin. Afterwards a few prayers were said. Virginie did not kneel. Sitting quietly in her corner, she watched the kneeling congregation.

Father Francesco, turning to the people, gave them, in soft, low voice, his blessing, "*Deus del nobis suam pacem.*" Solemnly rose responsive voices, "*Et vitam aeternam.* Amen." Some more prayers, then the final petition, "*Divinum auxilum,*" &c.—"May the Divine assistance remain with us."

Father Francesco ascended the pulpit. The service of the "Benediction of the Sacrament" would succeed the sermon.

The church wore a festal garb. A long array of candles blazed upon the altar; brilliant flowers were placed as offerings before the shrines of saints. A throng of persons—some standing, some sitting—raised their eyes, bright with expectation, to the pulpit. Father Francesco preached a grand sermon—earnest, powerful, eloquent. In sublimely simple words he told the touching Christmas story. His hearers were thrilled, spell-bound, melted to soft tears. Virginie listened approvingly. No doctrinal point, on which Protestants differ from Romanists, was touched on. The sermon might have been delivered in a Protestant church.

His preaching over, Father Francesco knelt in prayer. His head sank heavily upon his hands.

Then there was a great shuffling of feet. At least half the congregation left the church before the "Benediction"

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service began. All paused before the presepio, and crossed themselves devoutly.

Virginie lost sight of her friends in the crowd; she made her way alone out of the church.

Karl came out alone too. He looked round for Franz, but not seeing him, pursued his way slowly homewards, supposing that the boy would overtake him.

But Franz remained till the last office was over; then he followed Father Francesco into the sacristy.

"May I say a few words to you, father?"

"Assuredly, my son."

"It is—it is"—the boy's voice sank to a whisper—"it is about Virginie that I want to speak, father."

In spite of himself, the priest coloured furiously. The boy's words seemed an echo of his own thoughts.

Then Franz began. He told the priest first of his brother Karl's great love for Lina; and he declared that, jealously watching her on behalf of his brother, he had discovered, what Karl never suspected, what it would break Karl's heart to learn—that Lina's love was not for her betrothed, that it was given to Antonio del Palmello. Then he spoke of Antonio's well-known attachment to Virginie.

"I would give all the world," he said, hotly, "if Virginie could be brought to become Antonio's wife. Lina, when persuaded that Antonio was lost to her for ever, would surely turn to Karl, and prize his constant affection at last at its true worth. Father"—the boy drew a step nearer, and laid his hand eagerly on the priest's arm—"I know that to you is given the task of striving to bring Virginie within the fold of the true Church; and I am convinced that if

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your efforts prove successful, then Virginie's betrothal with Antonio will follow her conversion. Father"—the boy raised to the priest his earnest face—"it is not for me to doubt your ardour in fighting the Church's battles. Forgive me if my love to Karl makes me appear presumptuous to you. But indeed I could not sleep, could not rest, till I had implored you to strive more diligently, to strive with all your might, to gain for me the exceeding gladness of seeing removed the one great obstacle which bars the way to Virginie's marriage with Antonio."

With Antonio! Virginie's love could never have been the priest's, but it costs him some pain to hear it spoken of as possibly given to another.

"Forgive me my presumption, father!"

"I have nothing to forgive," replied Father Francesco. "I must thank you, rather," he continued, humbly, "for urging me onward in the way of my duty. I promise you, my son, to strive with all my strength to gain over Virginie to the Church. And—if she love Antonio"—the priest's voice faltered a little here—"I trust that a day may yet dawn when that love shall be crowned and blessed."

No further word was spoken. Franz touched the priest's hand in parting salutation, then the two passed together out of the church.

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CHAP. III.—"FAREWELL!"

TIME flew quickly by, till at last came the day when Karl Kaiserling must bid farewell to Rome. His last few days were fully occupied; he had much business to transact, many parting calls to pay. But he spent all his evenings at home with Lina.

Lina was kind and tender to him during the last days of his stay with her. Now that the time had really come when she would have him no longer by her side, she began to think how loyal he had ever been to her, how worthy her confidence and trust. And a great remorse filled her heart sometimes, when the plain truth came before her, that she bestowed on him, in answer to his own great love, no love worthy of the name. Why had she not, long ago, owned the truth to him? Why had she not confessed that her heart was another's—not his? Why had she let things go on as in the early days of her betrothal? She had repaid Karl's truth with utter falsehood. She told herself that she would at last be frank—that she would speak to Karl before he went of her changed feelings towards him—of her unrequited, but all-absorbing love for another. It would be better, a thousand times better and wiser, to give him at once the great

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pain of knowing the truth, than to allow him to go on wasting on her an affection which she returns not one whit.

Every night she thought to herself, "To-morrow I will tell him." And when the morrow came, she still said, "To-morrow." So the story was untold.

The last day came.

Karl woke at daybreak—woke from a troubled dream. In his dream he saw a battle-field. Confused images of rushing horses, of fighting men, passed before his eyes. He heard the roar, the din, the tramp of war. The struggle was between Prussian and French soldiers. Suddenly there was a cry that the French were flying, that it was for the Prussians to pursue.

Karl found himself charging at the head of his regiment, and shouting to his men to follow him to victory. Another moment—he looked around him, confused, bewildered. The armies had disappeared; the din had ceased; heavy silence rested on the battle-field.

All at once a solitary Frenchman approached Karl, challenging him with gestures to single combat. As Karl turned to obey the call, he observed, wonderingly, that the Frenchman was dressed in the scarlet uniform of the Papal Guard.

Karl lifted his sword. But his arm seemed to have lost its power; it fell useless by his side. And, lo! a form stood between him and the Frenchman; a mocking face laughed at his impotence in the fight. The mocking face was Lina's. Karl woke with a start.

Through the day Karl spoke no word of sadness, though his heart was heavy with the thought of the parting which lay before him. With Franz he talked gaily,

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bidding the boy look forward to a happy meeting before many months should pass.

Madame von Podewils was anxious that no gloomy character should be given to Karl's departure. He was but going for a time, she said. All Europe was at peace. There was no alarm of coming war to arouse fears for Karl. In the summer he would obtain a short leave, and would come again to Rome.

A few intimate friends looked in in the evening to bid Karl good-bye. He was to start at nine o'clock.

The friends were the Marchesa del Palmello and Antonio, Virginie Tonais, Father Francesco, a family of Germans, and two Italian ladies (relations of Madame von Podewils).

They assembled in a bright little *salon*, looking upon a small court, gay with orange trees. Madame von Podewils made coffee for her guests, and brought it them with her own hands as they sat about the room.

Virginie Tonais sought a corner behind a large piano. She called Franz to her side, and tried hard, by talking energetically on all sorts of happy subjects, to call up a smile on his sad face. The boy's eyes were red and swollen with crying. His crippled figure seemed, in Virginie's eyes, to speak more pathetically than ever of extreme weakness. The boy's face was a beautiful one. Large dark eyes formed its chief attraction. His hair fell over a forehead of exquisite whiteness; the colour came and went upon his cheeks fitfully as on a girl's. His mouth was sensitive and delicate.

He scarcely listened to what Virginie said. He watched Karl and Lina.

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Antonio stood warming his feet at a little stove. He had made one or two efforts to station himself near Virginie; she had always eluded those attempts. Now that she had pressed herself against the wall in her corner, and had carefully placed Franz between Antonio and herself, Antonio chose to sulk; he cared little who saw his vexation. Madame von Podewils tried once or twice to lead him into conversation; he answered always in monosyllables; then his handsome face turned away from his questioner.

Father Francesco stood near the Marchesa del Palmello, talking with her on indifferent subjects, while she sipped her coffee. It struck the marchesa sometimes, when her eyes were raised to the priest's face, that he looked worn and pale. But he told her, in answer to her questions, that he was quite well—that he might perhaps have been working rather hard, and was a little tired.

Karl's cheerful voice was heard talking with each of the guests. Antonio actually roused himself to answer. He was fond of Karl.

"And so you are really going to-night," he said. "I envy you. I am sick of Rome." And he looked savagely towards Virginie.

Karl laughed. He strayed on, and spoke a word to his German friends. Then he came to Virginie. "You will give us a song to-night?" he asked.

"What shall I sing?"

"Anything — anything that is soft, and low, and tender, and not too sad."

So Virginie sang. And Antonio lifted his head and listened. At last he came to the piano.

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"Franz, will you let me have your place, near Virginie?"

Virginie could not stop her singing to remonstrate. So Franz walked away, and Antonio sat down.

The song was not a long one. Karl heard it to the end; then he asked Lina to play.

"Not to-night, dear Karl; not to-night."

"As you will, Lina." He took her cold, passive hand in his. He sat quietly by her side. Every now and then he turned his head to a clock which hung at some little distance from him.

Its hands seemed to move very quickly, he thought. He had little time in which to say all that he wished to say. And there came a suspicious catching in his breath when he tried to speak. He grew strangely silent. Lina asked him a question sometimes, and he answered in few words, and in a low voice.

He was thinking—thinking—thinking—as he sat silent by her side, that in a few minutes he must bid her farewell. And some voice in his heart seemed to tell him that the farewell would be a final one. He thought of all the loving words which she had ever said to him, all the loving looks which had passed from her eyes to his. And he thanked her for them in his heart of hearts, though no word could pass from that heart to his lips. He never thought of her occasional fretfulness and impatience with him—never once.

The time went fast—very fast. Lina grew silent as Karl. The revelation which she had intended to make to him trembled on her lips. But it was unspoken.

At last Karl rose. The time had come. He went hastily round the room, and bade good-bye to all the

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guests. His voice never faltered; it was calm, and clear, and brave. Presently he returned to Lina. He stooped down, lifted her face gently to his, and his eyes sought hers in a lingering, yearning gaze. But he only said, very quietly—

"Good-bye, dear. Don't forget me."

Lina felt a hot kiss upon her lips, and Karl left her. He made his way out of the room.

On the stairs he met Antonio and Franz. Antonio had quite lost his listless manner. He gave Karl both his hands, kissed him in continental fashion on both cheeks, and cheerily wished him God-speed.

Franz crept downstairs with Karl. The brothers were together by the open door. It was a warm night, but Franz shivered as though with cold. The boy shed no tears; he stood by Karl's side, pale, mute, utterly miserable.

At last he touched his brother with his trembling hand.

"Karl! Oh, Karl, Karl!"

Karl threw his arm round the boy.

"Hush! It's only for a little while."

"Why can't I go too? Why am I weak and helpless, and useless in the world?"

"Useless! Hush, Franz! Who in this wide world has ever been of greater use to me than thou hast been? Whom shall I ever hold more tenderly in grateful remembrance than I hold thee? Even now thou hast a charge to execute for me. It is thine to watch over Lina, to comfort her in my absence."

"Comfort!" There was a touch of scorn in the boy's

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voice. In his own mind, he thought that Lina needed little comfort.

"And now I must go. I must—I must."

Karl loosened Franz's grasp, bent over him, and kissed him on the forehead tenderly, as his long-dead mother might once have done.

Then he said simply, almost in the words which he had used to Lina—

"Good-bye, dear. Thou'lt not forget me. Good-bye! good-bye!"

He moved away, and Franz drew back into a corner, covering his face with his hands.

Suddenly there was a touch on Karl's arm. Turning, he saw Lina.

"I come to say farewell once more."

Karl drew her to him.

"I think so much to-night, dear Karl, of those happy days in Germany when you and I were first betrothed. How long ago they seem now; how long, long ago! Ah, they were happy days, dear Karl; were they not? We loved each other truly then!"

Lina's head sank on Karl's shoulder.

"'Loved!' Is our love a thing of the past, my Lina? We love each other now, surely, as truly as we have ever loved?"

"Karl, forgive me. I——." Lina's confession is all but made now. But Karl's ardent gaze is upon her, and she cannot bring herself to speak the words which will pain him to the heart.

"Farewell, Karl. *Lebe wohl! Lebe wohl!*"

Karl takes her in his arms. How strong upon him

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then is the presentiment that he will never, never—in this poor world, at least—see his love again, he does not say. One long, long look he bends upon her; one long, long kiss he presses on her lips.

"Farewell!" he echoes gently. In another moment he is gone.

Farewell! Ah! sweet Italian night, which makest so fair a show of happiness; ah! melodious symphony of rushing breezes, can ye not recognise the pain of that low cry, "Farewell!"

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CHAP. IV.—HARD WORK.

THE days went on, till Karl's departure ceased to form a subject for conversation in Rome. All the members of Madame von Podewils' household were growing accustomed to Karl's absence.

Franz missed his brother—missed him every day, every hour—but he seldom mentioned his name. The boy devoted himself to study, and spent most of his time in solitude. Father Francesco, kindly anxious to divert Franz's thoughts from sorrowful themes, came sometimes to give him lessons in French and Latin. When the lad joined the family at meals, or other stated times, his white, wan face excited little remark. Franz had always been more or less ailing throughout his short life.

Lina thought with infinitely more tenderness of Karl, now that he was far away, than she had ever thought during the days which he had passed with her in Rome. She allowed her mind to travel back to the old time in Germany, when Karl had, in very truth, been all in all to her. She strove, strove honestly, to conquer her affection for Antonio; and she resolved to see Antonio as little as possible. Meanwhile all Rome talked of Antonio's attachment to Virginie, and all Rome prophesied that a

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marriage between the two was imminent. What mattered it, said the gossips, that Virginie protested that she had no love for Antonio, when her actions belied her words—when she passed much time in the company of Father Francesco, and was evidently preparing her mind to profess the Roman Catholic faith, the only faith she was permitted to hold if she sought to be the wife of an officer in the Papal Noble Guard? Certain it was that Virginie did allow the priest to place before her all his arguments in favour of his creed. Lina often met Virginie walking with Father Francesco; the two were always talking earnestly. Lina turned away, sick at heart. Sometimes, too, she met Virginie and her pupils walking with Antonio. Then a still sharper pain seized her. She stood still to watch them. Antonio's two sisters walked on first; the young man followed with Virginie; intently he watched his companion; anxiously he hung upon her words.

Then Lina went home, crept upstairs to her own room, and tried to think of Karl.

Sometimes Lina asked herself how it would be with her if the event which she dreaded were really to happen—if Antonio's marriage with Virginie were really to take place.

She pictured to herself a crowded church; she heard bells ring out joyously; she saw a bridal procession—saw Virginie's face look timidly out from a crown of bridal flowers—saw Antonio walk proudly through the church, Virginie, his bride, upon his arm. Lina pressed her hands tightly over her eyes, as if to shut out the vision which her own fancy had conjured up.

She wrote often to Karl friendly, affectionate letters, in which she said no word touching the revelation which

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she had intended to make him. Why grieve him, she now asked herself, with a confession of her want of love for him? The love would come, perhaps. At any rate, she had no hope of gaining Antonio's affection. She told herself that if she could make Karl's life happy, she would not care how dreary was her own life. She would not cast off her promise; she would become Karl's wife.

She spent much time at the piano. Often in the quiet evening time, when a tender shade was gathering over earth and sky, she sat in her own room playing softly the airs which Karl loved best—always Karl's favourite airs—German melodies, simple and sweet. Franz looked in sometimes, and listened in silence to her playing.

Whenever I think of Lina von Podewils, I like best to recall her thus sitting in the short Italian twilight playing those German tunes. There is something very pitiful in the perseverance with which she plays on, striving hard to find happiness in the memories which the music brings. I seem to hear the notes falling in melodious succession, as her hands, very white in the half darkness, move along the keys. Her head is bent a little; her eyes—deep, grey eyes, dreamy Italian eyes, which she inherits from her Italian mother—are fixed on vacancy. Days are coming when the image of Lina will suggest to my mind no very pleasant memories. I love to dwell upon her, therefore, as she is now, at her tenderest and best.

Lina tried to employ herself energetically—to pass no portion of her days in idleness. She went often on foot, accompanied by an Italian servant, to the great flight of steps leading from the Piazza di Spagna to the church of the Trinità de' Monti. On these steps throng Italian

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beggars, and also, waiting to be hired, numbers of Italian models. The occupants of the steps form one of the sights to be seen in Rome. One of the models Lina often engaged, took home, and tried to sketch. Sometimes her picture was of an old man, with flowing patriarchal beard; sometimes a bright-eyed *contadina* girl, dressed in her picturesque peasant costume; sometimes a chubby child. Lina practised her music diligently too, commenced intricate pieces of needlework, and otherwise found means of occupation.

One day, not very long after Karl's departure, Lina was sitting in the little *salon;* she was copying some music. She heard upon the stairs the sound of a jingling sword; then approached a slow, loitering step. Lina's colour rose; she looked round for her mother, but her mother was not in the room.

The door opened; Antonio entered. It was no unusual thing to see him here. He often strayed in, sat for a while, bored himself greatly apparently, and then took leave. Lina shook hands with him now, and bade the servant call Madame von Podewils.

"I interrupt you. You are busy."

"Not at all. I am glad to see you."

Lina's voice, when she spoke to Antonio, was never quite her own natural voice. But Antonio did not notice its constrained tone. He seated himself, and asked after Karl.

"Karl is quite well. He sends his kindest remembrances to all his friends."

"A splendid fellow, Karl! I often wish that I had half his energy." Antonio stifled a yawn.

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Here Madame von Podewils came in. Madame von Podewils was a sprightly-looking lady, who seemed younger than her years. She was said to possess immense conversational powers. The report was a false one; she had power, but only in one direction. The lady was an inexhaustible talker, but was a fidgetty, restless listener, unless the subject on which she was addressed happened to excite her curiosity.

Madame began at once. She had the gossip of Rome at her fingers' ends. Had Antonio heard the last new scandal about Cardinal Mardi? Truly that was a man who would never grow old, who was constantly in scrapes. What! Antonio was perpetually at the Vatican, and had actually not heard!

And so on, and so on, and so on. Madame talked, and Antonio listened, or appeared to listen. He laughed feebly; he made few comments; the news did not interest him in the least.

At last Madame von Podewils, putting on an insinuating smile, inquired how Mademoiselle Tonais was.

Antonio looked up. Mademoiselle Tonais appeared very well at breakfast-time. He had not seen her since.

"I take great interest in Virginie Tonais. She spent some weeks at my house, you know."

"Indeed, yes. She never forgets your kindness to her at the time of her sorrow."

Antonio's face had grown quite earnest. Lina took up her pen, and bent over her music.

"And now, tell me—I am an old friend, you know"—Madame von Podewils laid her hand on the young man's—"when your marriage with Virginie is to take place.

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All the world is talking about it, and wondering when it is to happen."

Antonio's face flushed. He did not look confused or shamefaced, as an Englishman thus questioned invariably looks, but a happy expression came into his eyes, and his voice was free and unrestrained.

"Very soon, I hope."

Lina bent her head lower over her music. One moment she resolved to shut her ears to the conversation between Antonio and her mother; in the next moment she found herself listening so intently, that her heart seemed to stand still, and keep silence for Antonio's words.

"It is my hateful appointment which has divided us so long—my appointment, which requires that my wife should share my faith. I have always been more than willing to resign that appointment, but Virginie has forbidden the step, declaring that if I desert my post, she will refuse my hand."

"Well?"

"Well! Virginie hasn't joined our Church—yet. But I think—I hope—that she will soon do so. Father Francesco says——" Antonio hesitated.

"Says what?"

"He says that he is sure, quite sure, that Virginie is in love." Antonio's head bent low; he played with his sword. "He says that he is sure, quite sure, that Virginie absolutely longs to join the Church, whose doctrines her conscience as yet disapproves. I cannot doubt that Father Francesco's powerful persuasions, aided by her own wishes, will soon conquer her scruples. Father Francesco tells me that already she shows signs of yielding."

"I congratulate you, Antonio."

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And Madame von Podewils, who, in her extreme good nature, was perhaps a little too much inclined to interest herself in the affairs of her friends, nodded her head, crossed and recrossed her hands, and assumed an expression of deep satisfaction.

Presently a new thought struck her. She called up a graver look, and said, with an affectation of solemnity—

"We ought to rejoice in the thought of Virginie's conversion, less for your sake than for the faith's sake, Antonio."

Antonio shrugged his shoulders.

"So says the Holy Father. His Holiness deigned to speak with me on the subject when I was in attendance this morning at the Vatican. He had heard all about Virginie, and my love for her, from Father Francesco, Cardinal Mardi, and others. Now I haven't"—Antonio rose and faced Madame von Podewils—"the slightest objection to Virginie's religion—in itself. I didn't tell his Holiness so, naturally. But I haven't indeed. Virginie's religion has made her, or has left her, true, pure, disinterested. I want no better religion."

Madame von Podewils lifted her hands in pious horror. If Papal spies had filled, to her certain knowledge, every corner of the room, she could scarcely have looked more dismayed.

"Antonio, my dear Antonio, you speak of heresy, and you call it by the name of religion."

Antonio laughed. Then he took his cap.

"We won't quarrel, Madame von Podewils. My interests and the Church's interests are identical. Thank you for your congratulations and sympathy. Good-bye."

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Antonio approached Lina. He paused a moment, her hand in his.

"My mother complains," he said, "that you never come to see us now."

Lina hesitated. "I will come before long," she replied.

"Ay, do. Let Franz bring you some evening. We'll have music. You will play, won't you, as you only can play—not that vague German music which you are copying there, but something Italian, something full of life and meaning."

"Don't abuse German music, please. I am German.'

"On your father's side. On your mother's you are one of us. Don't disown Italy. Ah! I forgot myself sadly. Karl is all German; your sentiments are German, of course. Well! only come, and play what you like. And Virginie shall sing."

Virginie! Always Virginie! Lina's eyes fell to the ground.

"*A rivederla, Signorina.*"

Lina bowed her head.

For some minutes after Antonio had quitted the room, she went on with her music-copying, not moving from the position in which he left her. At last she rose and walked to the piano. But she shook her head. "I can't play to-night," she said. So she went to the window and looked out. It was her favourite twilight hour.

Lina leaned her head on her hands. She stood long, gazing on the evening sky till gathering darkness obscured her view. Then she turned away with a sigh.

"It's hard work, Karl," she said; "it's hard work."

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CHAP. V.—THE STRANGERS' CEMETERY.

"AMO, amas, amant, amanus, amatis, amant."

"Yes, yes. But never mind about Latin verbs to-day, my boy. You look tired of study. Let us talk about something pleasant — the coming carnival, for instance."

It was Father Francesco who spoke, and the person whom he addressed was Franz. Approaching carnival entertainments had little interest for the priest, and his heart, if truth were known, was very heavy with troubles of his own; still, he could not bear to see Franz's face pale and woe-worn. He sat down and talked himself, for Franz showed no disposition to do so—talked on the most amusing subjects which presented themselves to his mind.

Franz barely listened.

"Have you any news of Virginie for me, father?" he asked at length.

"None; none yet." The priest rose a little hastily. He turned over Franz's lesson-books; he grew strangely silent.

Presently he looked at his watch.

"Time flies," he said. "I have an appointment soon in the Church of St. John's, in Lateran. I must go now.

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Good-bye, Franz; good-bye, dear boy. Don't mope, there's a dear lad; and don't trouble about the lessons. Let Latin take care of itself awhile."

"Good-bye, father. You remember your promise."

"I remember well, my son."

One of the most magnificent and most interesting of the many interesting and magnificent churches in Rome, is the church towards which the priest made his way—the Church of St. John, in Lateran. It is the cathedral of the Pontiff, who takes possession of it after his election. It is the scene of many grand services.

The church has a fine nave, with five aisles. Its size is vast. Huge statues of the apostles stand in front of the columns. In the tribune is a mosaic head of the Saviour. This is said to be of the time of Constantine; it commemorates the vision of the Redeemer, who is believed to have appeared to Constantine and Sylvester on the day of the consecration of the church. His visible presence blessed their work.

The church derives some of its fame from the relics which it contains. A table, supposed by Romanists to have been used by St. Peter in the celebration of mass, is preserved here; a slab, upon which Roman soldiers are said to have cast lots for the seamless coat, is to be seen in the cloisters.

On the day upon which Father Francesco announced an appointment in St. John, Lateran, a cardinal-bishop—Cardinal Mardi—held an ordination in the church. A portion of the church was railed off for the service.

At half-past eight in the morning the service began; it lasted several hours. Spectators—chiefly foreigners and

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peasants, the principal besiegers of Roman churches during grand ceremonies—congregated; they stood or sat outside the rails. The cardinal's robes were superb; he wore sometimes his gold mitre, sometimes his jewelled one, according to the changes in the service. Between nine and ten o'clock a solemn litany—the Litany of Loretto—was sung. The canons, minor canons, and clergy of the church knelt; the young men about to take orders prostrated themselves upon the ground. The litany over, the ordination proper began: the young men approached the cardinal according to their rank—first came those who were to receive the office of sub-deacon; then those who desired to be deacons; finally, those who were to be made priests. Upon the sub-deacons were placed surplices; upon the deacons, copes. The priests, who were received by the cardinal-bishop upon a step higher than the one on which knelt the deacons and sub-deacons, were adorned with chasubles. The priests' hands were anointed with oil by the cardinal.

The service had proceeded far when Father Francesco entered the church. He did not advance to the enclosed space, but walked up and down the nave; he heard, but little heeded, sacred music, which filled the air. His mind was pre-occupied.

He was to meet Virginie Tonais in the church.

Up and down he walked slowly, his head bent, his eyes on the ground. Strangers who were inspecting the church observed the priest, and were struck by the stern, sad expression of his beautiful young face.

On Father Francesco's heart the old trouble weighed; the old forbidden love for Virginie was there.

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He set before himself his duty to the Church, his duty to Antonio. He did not shrink from that duty; no word or sign from him had ever told how painful the duty was.

But now, as he wandered along the church, a feverish wish seized him that he had done with his trouble—that the time had come for him to die, and leave his work to another. He sternly checked the wish; and he told himself that he should exult in the thought of the high dignity accorded to him by the compassionate Mother of Sorrows, who deemed him worthy of a life of suffering, as well as of a life of toil. He murmured a prayer under his breath, and grew calm and brave again.

At last, looking up, he saw Virginie standing near the niche which contained the statue of St. Andrew. He was about to join her at once, when he observed that she was deep in conversation with a lady. He waited till the conversation should be over.

The lady with whom Virginie was speaking was known to the priest. She was an Englishwoman, a certain Lady Hilton, who was travelling through Italy. She intended to leave Rome that night for Florence, where she hoped to pass some months. She would take with her a little daughter, now in Rome. For the child she had some time ago engaged as governess a young French lady, recommended to her by Virginie Tonais; and now she poured into Virginie's ears a dolorous tale of impolite treatment received from this lady. The day before, the governess had thrown up her engagement, and refused to go to Florence. "I think," said Lady Hilton, angrily, in stumbling French, "that she has found an admirer in one

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of the regiments stationed in the city, and thus it is that she declines to leave Rome."

Virginie could only express her regret; she was not answerable for the delinquencies of her friends.

Talking and laughing as they passed along, came a crowd of persons. Here, in Roman churches, people assemble not only to say prayers—not only to kneel, "almost trembling with respect," before sacred relics, before shrines of saints—but also to gossip, and to meet friends.

And now the organ sounded. There burst forth a triumphant opening of a grand hymn. Virginie heard lovely voices ascend in glorious musical thunder.

High mass was celebrated. Smoking censers were swung; long lines of thin, white smoke followed acolytes, who moved in and out of the chapel. Lights blazed out upon the altar; the gates of the chapel swung open, and there passed in a procession of men and boys, bearing candles for the approaching elevation. The "Pax," or "Embrace"—the sign of peace—went round. The cardinal embraced the ecclesiastic nearest to him, saying, "Peace be with you." The embrace was passed from one to another, through all the assistants in the service. Then the music ceased, and the low, quavering voice of the cardinal was heard chanting before the altar.

Father Francesco advanced to Virginie. He led her away to a distant part of the church, where the monotonous chant of the cardinal was only faintly heard, where the crowded chapel was indistinctly seen.

The priest's greeting was cold and grave. Virginie received him timidly, just touching his hand with her own.

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Father Francesco began his pleading for Antonio, his pleading for his Church. He told his old story, used his old arguments. But he was more vehement than he had ever been. A bright, proud look lighted his eyes; his voice trembled with emotion as he spoke of the dignity, the immutability of his Church. With deep earnestness, he once more besought Virginie to seek refuge in that Church.

All at once he paused. A tinkling bell was heard. It told all its hearers that a mighty miracle, in which all true Romanists believe, was about to take place—that the Host was about to be elevated. A solemn silence fell upon the church; in unutterable reverence the people knelt; a great awe came upon all the worshippers. Father Francesco knelt too, and clasped his hands.

Virginie stood; she closed her eyes. The priest's words seemed to be still sounding in her ears. She saw no longer the distant chapel, the glittering vestments, the brilliant altar, the kneeling crowd; she saw, or seemed to see, the lonely Strangers' Cemetery—saw tall, sorrowful cypresses—saw long, wet grass—saw, lying here and there upon the ground, wreaths of faded flowers.

A great sob escaped her.

The priest rose. He turned to the girl, and repeated his invitation to her to join his Church; he said something, in a faltering, uncertain voice, concerning Antonio and Antonio's love. But his eyes never sought Virginie's—they were bent upon the ground.

"I cannot—cannot—cannot; how were it possible? If my father were still alive, it would break his heart to know me a deserter from his faith."

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The priest advanced a step nearer. The exquisite tones of the organ were sounding. The drifting trails of incense smoke were seen again. A magnificent chant echoed along the nave.

"Your father has passed from this world of error. He stands in the white light of truth. His mistakes, we trust, are atoned for and forgiven. Doubt not that he would now rejoice to know you safe within the true Church—the Church whose doctrines he, in ignorance, rejected."

But Virginie only cried out, as though she had not heard the priest's words—

"It would break my father's heart."

There was silence.

"Father," at last said Virginie's low voice, "you have pleaded with me for the last time. I can no longer hear the entreaties which meet me on all sides to give up my old creed. In my own heart is a wild longing to yield to those entreaties; but I cannot forget, I cannot disobey, my father's dying command. I must not remain in Rome. Lady Hilton, with whom you saw me speaking in this church, leaves Rome to-night for Florence. She requires a governess for her child. I will accept the post. I will quit Rome to-night, quit it perhaps for ever. Antonio's mother will forgive my sudden desertion of her when she hears its cause. I always knew, always felt"—the girl's voice broke—"that the end must come thus. What it costs me to fly from Rome, I cannot say.

"Father Francesco"—the girl drew nearer the priest, and her eyes rose timidly to his—"how shall I ever thank you for the interest you have taken in me, for

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your invariable kindness to me? I would give everything I possess to be free to accept your often-repeated invitation to join your Church. But no! I will respect that Church, love that Church always—for its own sake, yours, and Antonio's—belong to it I may not. Say good-bye to Antonio for me, father. He will mourn for me. I know that he will mourn for me at first. But in time he will forget me and be happy."

"Father, it may be"—great tears gathered in the girl's upturned eyes—"that in this world you and I may never meet again. I shall not forget you—you will always have a place in my most loving and grateful memory. And in that far-off world, where my dear father waits for me, you and I will surely, surely meet again. Our paths differ, but our goal is still the same. My father, farewell."

Virginie raised the priest's hand timidly to her lips. Another moment, and she had gone.

Father Francesco looked up, bewildered by the suddenness of her departure. He could hardly bring himself to believe that, after so short a warning, she was really about to leave Rome—to leave him, perhaps, never to return. He had said no word in answer to her farewell. He made his way to the church door, and looked out.

Virginie was hastening across the Piazza of St. John. Her head was bent dejectedly; the priest saw that she dashed tears from her eyes as she hurried along. He stood long, looking after her, till a turn in the road hid her from his sight. With a fierce effort only could he keep back the tears which gathered in his own eyes. "God grant," he said softly, as he stood gazing mechanically upon the spot where he last saw Virginie, "that thy true heart may

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never be wrung with generous sorrow, to learn how desolate mine is this day. God grant that thou may'st never know how I have loved thee, Virginie."

He re-entered the church. The procession of priests and cardinal was leaving the chapel. The organ was sounding its last notes. In Father Francesco's ears the low music seemed like a funeral dirge. The service was over.

Father Francesco walked up and down the nave, his head upon his breast, his hands clasped behind his back. The cardinal, who was unrobed, came tottering down the nave: he was old and infirm, and the long service had been a great exertion to him. He was one of the high dignitaries of the Church. There are among cardinals cardinal-deacons, cardinal-priests, and many grades in the ecclesiastical authority: this old man was a cardinal-bishop. No one but a bishop can, of course, ordain priests. With him walked a company of canons, who laughed and talked together.

They all stopped and greeted Father Francesco. He answered mechanically, in a hard, cold voice. The cardinal, as we have seen, knew Virginie Tonais. All the great world of Rome talked of her in connection with Antonio del Palmello, whose position in the Noble Guard made him a conspicuous member of Roman society.

"I fancied," said the cardinal, "that I saw Mademoiselle Tonais walking with you a few minutes ago in the church. Tell me, how goes on the work of her conversion?"

Father Francesco turned away. A stream of words, hastily uttered, came from his lips.

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"She is gone. To-night she will leave Rome. Perhaps she may never return. She remains a heret—a—a—Protestant."

The priest moved on.

"Perhaps she may never return! Perhaps she may never return!" Again and again Father Francesco murmured these words to himself. He strove to realise their meaning.

He had seen that lovely face, with its golden hair, its gentle eyes, perchance for the last time. Virginie's soft voice might never sound upon his ears again.

The January day passed rapidly. Afternoon came. The shadows deepened. The church grew dim. The vesper bell of St. John's, Lateran, rang out solemnly. In the early ages of the Church, vespers commenced late in the day, at about the time when the evening or vesper star appeared; hence the name "vespers"—the evening office. But in Rome, vespers now take place two full hours before sunset. This afternoon, however, was unusually dark. Lights before shrines glimmered out in the gathering obscurity.

Father Francesco was kneeling before a picture of the Madonna. The pictured face looked down upon him with tender, compassionate eyes.

To the pitying Virgin the priest told all the tale of his hapless love.

"*Mea culpae! mea culpae!* I have sinned. My heart should have been all thine own, and I have given it to another. Forgive me. Teach me to bear the pain of separation from my darling, or take me to thyself." The priests' head sank upon his hands.

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The vesper bell rang on. Father Francesco woke with a start. It was time for vespers in his own church. He had been unconscious of the flight of time. Since early morning he had haunted St. John's Church.

He rose, hastened through the streets to his church, arrived late, and then said vespers. The small congregation gathered in the church remarked that the priest's face was pale and haggard. But he made no complaint.

After vespers, Father Francesco held, in the sacristy, a catechising class for young children. He took infinite pains. With the children he was gentle as a child. One little one rested upon his knee; another boldly held his hand; all clustered round him, and asked him questions fearlessly.

The class over, the priest dismissed the children with a blessing; then he locked the door, and made his way to his lonely home.

. . . . . .

It is evening in the Strangers' Cemetery. The sun has sunk low; long, grotesque shadows of tombstones creep along the grass.

Virginie Tonais is hastening to the cemetery; she must say farewell to her father's grave before she leave Rome to-night.

She passes quickly through the streets, till she comes to the Marble Wharf, on the Tiber; she continues her way along the dusty road which leads to Porta San Paolo, and at length she stands before the famous pyramid of Caius Cestius. At the foot of this huge pile lies the old Strangers' Cemetery. The New Burial Ground was not

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VIRGINIE AT HER FATHER'S GRAVE.

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opened till the year 1825, consequently it did not exist at the time of which I write.

Virginie passes, on her way, many stalls bearing bright wreaths of immortelles. In her heart is a half childish longing to lay some such offering upon the grave towards which she is bound. But she resists her desire. "No, no," she murmurs; "I am not worthy; I will not mock my dear, dead father with an offering which speaks only of peace and love, while a fierce storm of opposition to his wishes rages in my breast. I have refused, it is true, to enter the Church against which he warned me, but how lasting my resolution may prove I know not. Against my decision my heart rebels wildly."

Virginie enters the cemetery. Very quiet, singularly solemn it is, at this evening hour. The majestic pyramid, "itself a stranger among strangers," as Rogers truthfully describes it, looks down upon, and seems grimly to guard the resting-place of strangers. Here lie young men, stricken down when on their travels; here lie foreigners, young and old, from all countries—foreigners whose friends are far away in their distant native lands. Here, where wanderers from many climes rest in peaceful slumber side by side, is silently, but most eloquently, preached the doctrine of universal brotherhood.

Virginie reaches her father's grave. She places no offering upon it. But, kneeling meekly down upon the wet ground, she lays her lips upon the grass which decks the grave, and her hot tears fall fast and silently.

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CHAPTER VI.—MARTIN LUTHER'S HYMN.

THE news of Virginie's departure was very differently received by her different friends and acquaintances in Rome. The Marchesa del Palmello, whose intense love for her son had led her passively to consent to his attentions to Virginie, yet felt, now that the girl had really gone, no small satisfaction in the thought that the way was cleared to a more brilliant match for Antonio. The daughter of a French Protestant pastor, whose family was unexceptional, but whose means of living were small, had always seemed, in her eyes, an undesirable bride for her rich, handsome, noble Antonio.

To Antonio the news of Virginie's desertion of him came like a thunder-clap. She left behind her a letter, in which she bade him farewell. She thanked him for his love and faith towards her; she asked him to forgive her for the sorrow she caused him in finally rejecting his hand; and she begged him to try his best to forget her.

To Lina von Podewils the news brought a wild, tremulous joy. Antonio was free—free to love again.

To Franz Kaiserling the tidings gave only sadness. He thought of Antonio's freedom in connection with

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Lina's secret love, and his jealous fears for his brother Karl increased.

Father Francesco was utterly silent on the subject of Virginie Tonais. No day, no hour passed, however, on which he did not think of her; he missed her painfully. Sometimes he met Antonio at the Vatican, in the streets, at the houses of mutual friends. The young man's face darkened; he greeted Father Francesco with a scowl; he scorned the priest for the impotence of his efforts to bring about Virginie's conversion.

Father Francesco lived on his studious, formal life. Every morning and afternoon he performed service in his church. He wrote learned treatises; he went through a wearisome routine of parochial work. But he brought less energy to every task; wearily, mechanically he set about his duties.

All at once, shortly after Virginie's departure, he announced an intention to leave Rome.

The whole town abounded for him in memories of Virginie. Here, in the place where he first knew her, he could not dismiss her from his thoughts. The recollection of her, of her gentle face, of her soft voice, haunted him in the performance of his most solemn religious duties. He made up his mind to quite Rome, to seek some perferment in his own country, Switzerland.

He preached a farewell sermon.

Crowds filled his church. Bitter memories of the pride and joy with which he first entered on his duties in the place filled his mind, now that he resigned his post. He remembered how ardent he was then, how eager, with what an undivided heart he had resolved to serve his Church.

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His voice trembled when he began his sermon, but strength came to him as he proceeded. Never had he preached more grandly, with more power and earnestness.

His sermon, as might be expected on such an occasion, was somewhat personal. He prayed his people to forgive the many imperfections which had marred his labours among them; he asked them to think of him at his best, when he should be far away.

He bade them lead the Christian life. He urged them to deeds of penitence, forgiveness, charity. He charged them, above all, to hold fast the faith which they had received of him. And he gave them his blessing.

The last word spoken, Father Francesco descended the pulpit and stood in the church. One by one his hearers approached him. Most of them stretched their hands out to him; many voices bade him God speed; many low words of gratitude, for past kindness, were spoken to him.

The Marchesa del Palmello was in the church. She came up and expressed herself grieved to say good-bye to the priest. The reason of Father Francesco's departure was a mystery to her. She could not imagine why he should suddenly leave the capital of Christendom—the capital, where his rare talents and his devout life were gaining for him much fame—the capital, where he had made many friends, and had received much kindness. It could not be possible, she told herself, that disgust at the failure of his efforts to convert to the faith a simple girl like Virginie Tonais could be the cause of his flight from Rome. Why, then, did he go? Many times, during the few days that she had known of the priest's intended resignation of his duties, had she resolved to ask him

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why he would quit Rome. But something in his face—something grave, reserved, inscrutable—had checked her curiosity. She had never dared to question him.

The priest had been a great favourite of hers. She had not understood, but had admired him. She would miss his beautiful young face—miss his deep, earnest voice—miss his ready interest in all which concerned herself. She took his hand in hers, raised it reverently to her lips, and knelt for the priest's parting blessing. He gave it in broken voice.

Then Antonio came forward. His manner was still cold. He had hoped much from the priest's eloquence; he had trusted in that for the conversion of Virginie; he resented Father Francesco's failure as if it were a fault, rather than a misfortune. But he, too, knelt and received a low-breathed benediction. Another friend approached. It was Lina von Podewils.

She joined her voice to those which bade Father Francesco farewell. As the priest responded, he raised his eyes. He saw that Lina stood near Antonio, that Antonio's mother had moved aside to give her room.

A sudden recollection of Franz Kaiserling's assertion, concerning Lina's attachment to Antonio, flashed across the priest's mind, as he saw the two stand side by side in the church.

Franz had come up with Lina. Father Francesco saw that the boy's face was dark and angry.

The priest drew near. His heart was not so full of his own troubles, that he had no sympathy for the troubles of others.

"Don't fear for Karl," he whispered kindly in the boy's

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ear. "Lina will love him yet. She will find in time that Antonio's heart can never be hers; it is given to Virginie Tonais."

"But Virginie has gone—gone. Oh, father!"—the boy wrung his hands; his head sank on his narrow, misshapen chest—"you have let Virginie go; Antonio is free now."

The priest was silent for a moment. When he spoke at last, his voice had a strange, constrained tone. "I do not think—I cannot think," he said, and his face flushed crimson, "that a heart which has once loved Virginie can ever find room for another's image."

There was no reply.

"Have you heard lately from Karl? He is well, I hope."

"I heard yesterday, father. He is very well. His letter was quite full of enquiries about Lina."

"See, your cousin Lina is leaving the church, my boy; had you not better join her? It is time to say good-bye."

"How often, lately, have I said that hateful word? Everyone is going—everyone that I love or care for leaves Rome. First went Karl, whose loss seems greater to me every day; then Virginie Tonais, who would, I had hoped, remain always in Rome, as the wife of this Antonio; and now you go too, father. All my friends desert me."

"Hush! one friend remains, Franz." And the priest pointed solemnly to a painting hanging upon the church wall. It was not the Virgin's face which looked from this picture. It was a face grave, pathetically tender—a face which bent meekly over a patiently-carried cross. Around the head were rays of glory.

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As he gazed, the boy's own face softened. He took the priest's hand, kissed it respectfully, as the marchesa had done; then, without another word, he left the church.

The priest was alone.

He knelt for the last time on the cold stone floor. He raised his hands; he bowed his head.

The last time! With what rapture had he come to this church, actuated by the hope to remain all his life serving here as priest in his revered Rome! With what despondency and disappointment he leaves now, after only four years' service!

His work in Rome is over—his struggles, his failures, his weary toil all over.

He knelt long in prayer. Then he rose. His face was very grave; a dull, aching pain was in his heart. It was hard to him to say good-bye. He looked wistfully towards the pulpit where he had preached; his eyes rested on the very spot upon the wall where hung, last Christmas Eve, the cross, glittering with berries, brought by Virginie.

He walked slowly round the church. He knew familiarly every nook and corner—almost every stone upon the wall. He came to the door. It was time for him to go.

He paused, with his hand upon the leathern curtain hanging before the door. He looked back. Before shrines lamps were flickering. Other light there was none. The church was silent as a grave. The priest saw the Virgin's face, with the light falling on it; saw that other face which he had pointed out to Franz—a face whose compassionate eyes seemed to meet his as he gazed.

He dipped his hands, half mechanically, in the holy water vessel near the door; he crossed himself, lifted the

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curtain, and passed out into the street. He has looked his last, for many years at least, upon his church. When he shall have grown old, when he shall have overcome the weakness of his youth, he may perhaps return to Rome. He walked quickly through the town. There were still spots to which he must bid farewell before he left. In a short time he found himself before the Coliseum.

There it stands, that mighty Coliseum, in solitary, awful beauty—stately, majestic, mysterious, in the dim light. "Here the ghost of old Rome," writes Charles Dickens, "haunts the very ground where its people trod. The deserted, lonely Coliseum is the most stately, the most solemn, grand, mournful sight imaginable. Never, in its bloodiest prime, can the sight of the gigantic Coliseum, full and running over with the lustiest life, have moved one heart as it must move all who look upon it now, a ruin. God be thanked—a ruin." The priest enters. He approaches the tall, black cross which stands in the centre of the arena. The cross marks the spot where Christian martyrs suffered. Here Ignatius, said to have been the child specially blessed by the Saviour, gave up his life for the faith; here thousands after him were tortured for religion's sake.

The priest kisses the cross, as he has kissed it many times before. He stands silent beside it. His thoughts wander from the memories of pagan Rome which the Coliseum suggests—wander from the histories of martyrs and saints. He remembers one bright day last spring, when he stood here in the full blaze of noonday sunlight —he remembers seeing Virginie wandering with her pupils along the galleries; he seems to see her here again, as he

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saw her then, in her newly-assumed mourning dress—her fair face very sorrowful, her hands just closing, indifferently enough, upon a bunch of wall-flowers, gathered for her by her pupils from the Coliseum's mouldering walls.

The priest leaves the Coliseum.

He passes under the arch of Titus, sees the Jewish trophies sculptured inside the arch. Wonderful old arch, under which to this day no Jew will walk! Here, in gorgeous pageant, over this very pavement, has streamed a Roman triumph. Here captives have passed right mournfully; here, in triumphant procession, have flaunted victorious legions.

Along the sacred way the priest walks slowly. He sees the ruined palaces of long-dead Cæsars—sees temples of dethroned gods. He comes at last to the Roman Forum. Entrance into the Forum is forbidden at night. The man on guard, however, is familiarly known to Father Francesco; no objection is raised to the priest's progress.

He walks in the Forum. He looks upon the spot where Brutus is believed to have been seated when he saw his sons beheaded; he sees the site of the famous Comiteum—sees everywhere ruins upon which, for more than three centuries, scholars have been at work, bringing to bear upon their task of investigation deep learning and archæological research.

The priest pauses; he stands motionless among the ruins.

His fancy does not conjure up the heroes whose names are associated with this spot; he thinks of a day, some months ago, when, loitering here in the soft afternoon

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light, he saw Virginie moving along the Forum. With her were her pupils, and a few other persons; the party was marshalled everywhere by an old grey-haired Englishman, an enthusiastic archæologist. The priest seems to see Virginie's face as he saw it then, mystified, bewildered; he sees the respectful, half-awed look which she throws on the old man, who wanders among the ruins, pointing out confidently sites of old temples and buildings famous in the history of the world.

Virginie everywhere!

The priest does not linger long. He turns away; he leaves ancient Rome, and sets off to his house, where he gathers up his knapsack; then he starts on his long journey.

He loves Rome; he feels, to use the words of a great American writer, "its indescribably attractive and sympathetic power. His heart-strings have mysteriously attached themselves to the Eternal City, as if it were more familiar, more intimately his home, than even the spot where he was born." But he must quit the place on account of the memories of Virginie which haunt him here.

He leaves the town on foot, by the Civita Vecchia road. He crosses the bridge of St. Angelo; he looks upon the mighty Cathedral of St. Peter.

He waves his farewell to that glorious temple, the largest and grandest in the world.

He hastens on. Soon he is on the desolate Campagna. The moon has risen, clear and bright. Mountains, with snow on their summits, gleam in the distance. The country is lonely, and most solemn in its loneliness.

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The priest turns at last. Rome lies behind him; it cannot even be seen from the spot which he has reached. Only one great dome, the dome of the cathedral which he has left, stands out against the sky.

When Martin Luther, an obscure young monk, first came to the Eternal City, he addressed to it the ancient hymn of the pilgrims—

"I salute thee, oh holy Rome!—Rome venerable through the blood and the tombs of the martyrs."

Luther learned in course of time to cast off almost all feelings of reverence for the city.

But Father Francesco reverences and loves still the grand old town from which he flies.

He kneels upon the ground. He turns his face to the single dome standing out against the horizon. He murmurs that old hymn—

"I salute thee, oh holy Rome!—Rome venerable through the blood and the tombs of the martyrs."

His parting salutation made, he rises and pursues his onward way.

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CHAP. VII.—A BROTHER'S KEEPER.

TIME flew on. The Roman carnival came — the carnival—time for the maddest, gayest frolics that can possibly be dreamed of by the most fantastic of dreamers. Sober old Rome has an annual fit of insanity.

To the Corso—the principal street in Rome—a narrow, straight street of shops and palaces, which extend for at least a mile—the carnival merriment is confined. Such merriment, my masters! Carriages—lined for the time being with white calico, in order that showers of chalk, flour, sugar-plums, pelted from windows and balconies, may not injure them—drive along; their occupants, dressed in the most absurd and fantastic costumes that ingenuity can invent, are provided with baskets full of *confetti* and chalk, with heaps upon heaps of flowers and nosegays. In days gone by, our friend Antonio del Palmello had spent more money than I care to tell upon such missiles for balconies where ladies of his acquaintance had placed themselves. Sweetmeats, flowers, chalk are pelted almost indiscriminately from street to balconies, from balconies to street. Great vans, full of masqueraders—vans whose horses are decked with ribbons and feathers and branches of trees—pass along, amid the cheers, derisive or complimentary, of

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the bystanders. And bags of *confetti*, descending constantly upon the occupants, make them white as millers. Every onslaught is taken in good part; the perfect humour of the Roman crowd is beyond all praise.

The balconies, hung with scarlet, and decorated with flowers, are filled with ladies, dressed for the most part in coloured dominoes, and wearing over their faces little wire masks, to preserve them from sharp sugar-plum showers. Temporary balconies are raised to every house in the Corso, and windows above the balconies are thronged. In all Rome there lives not man, woman, or child but makes a harvest of pleasure or of profit out of the much-anticipated carnival. The loan of balconies alone brings in no small sum to their proprietors. "If, year after year, and season after season," writes Charles Dickens, in his "Pictures from Italy," "Rome had rained balconies, had hailed balconies, had snowed balconies, had blown balconies, they could scarcely have come into existence in a more disorderly manner."

But it is the last day of the carnival which sees its gayest madness. No other day of frolic can equal this. When dusk commences on the last day, sellers of tapers throng the Corso; shrill Roman voices shout "*Moccoli! moccoli! ecco moccoli!*"—Tapers! tapers! behold tapers! A brisk sale succeeds; everyone buys at least one taper. These candles are lighted.

Then begins a wild game, whose object is this:—Each person present tries his best to extinguish all other people's candles, and to keep his own alight. Drivers in carriages hold their lights at arm's length, at the same time aiming sticks, handkerchiefs—what not—at tapers blazing above

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them in windows and balconies, or below them and around them in the street. Immense extinguishers are carried by some determined players; while here and there men and boys are seen bearing long wands, with handkerchiefs at the end, ready for onslaught on high windows. And continually a mocking roar is heard, "*Senza moccolo! senza moccolo!*"—Without a candle! without a candle!

"In the wildest enthusiasm of the cry"—I again quote Charles Dickens—"in the fullest ecstasy of the sport, the Ave Maria rings out from the church steeples, and the long carnival is over in an instant—put out, like a taper, with a breath. The game of the *moccolo* is supposed by some to be a ceremony of burlesque mourning for the death of the carnival, candles being indispensable to Catholic grief."

Then all rejoicings come suddenly to an end, for Lent sets in.

The Lent of this year of which I write was mournful enough, except that, as usual, the ceremonies of Holy Week brought many visitors to Rome. The crowds attracted by these ceremonies found, if they would own the truth, that the sights which they saw were for the most part tedious and tiring.

At length Lent passed, and Easter came—Easter, with its Papal benediction, its gaiety, its rejoicing.

Two months had gone by since the young priest left Rome; more than two months had elapsed since Virginie Tonais went away.

In Father Francesco's place was a middle-aged priest—hearty, fat, good-humoured. His congregation liked him amazingly. He ordered them light penances; he was

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always ready to joke and laugh with them to their heart's content. Father Francesco never joked.

"A right jolly old fellow, this Father Eustachio," say his people. In truth, he is a man of somewhat vulgar mind, and somewhat vulgar manners. His long black cassock is greasy, and always in need of buttons; his hands are generally dirty; he speaks with a coarse Florentine accent, and hurries over his Church Latin as though he were not quite sure as to the true mode of its pronunciation. He preaches very seldom, and by no means well. A perfect contrast to Father Francesco is this loud-laughing, good-natured, boisterous priest.

The Marchesa del Palmello regretted the change. She remembered Father Francesco's eloquence—remembered his dignified manner, his sad, handsome face. She wondered again, wondered almost angrily, what could have induced him to leave Rome.

During the two months which had elapsed since Virginie went, Antonio had wearied Roman society with the sullenness of his manners. He had loved the girl in his impetuous fashion. He mourned for her now, and refused to be comforted.

In the carnival entertainments he took no part. All through Lent he moodily nursed his wrongs.

But when Easter came, and all Rome woke to merriment, Antonio grew tired of his grief. He loved Virginie as much as ever; but he resolved, nevertheless, to urge himself to share in some of the Easter gaieties in her absence. Madame von Podewils gave a large evening reception, and Antonio attended it.

He came in with a party of officers, the jingling of

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swords heralding their approach. He soon found a retired corner; he leaned his long length against a wall, and talked in low voice with a friend, who, like himself, was a member of the Noble Guard. If Antonio were not handsome, if he were not rich and noble, and therefore privileged, his manners would be called insolent. As he lounged in his corner, not troubling himself to speak to anyone but this officer who stood near, he every now and then lifted his eyes, and cast a supercilious glance upon some one person or another in the company; then he turned to his companion and murmured some remark, not generally flattering, upon the object of his survey.

Lina von Podewils looked remarkably well that evening —everyone observed the fact. Even Antonio raised his eyeglass a second time to look at her; and, as he returned her bow, he remarked to his brother officer that Lina was "by no means a bad-looking girl, after all."

Franz was there, seated in solitary state in an easy chair. Many visitors attempted to open a conversation with the boy; but he seemed ill-disposed to talk, so they all moved away. Franz looked tired and ill.

The rooms grew very full. Antonio in his corner gave his eyeglass no rest. He inspected all the new-comers, bowed carelessly to those whom he knew, and stared languidly at those with whom he had no acquaintance. He began to bore himself much. "Oh, if Virginie were only here!" he muttered under his breath. "I hate Rome viciously, now that she has gone." His friend the officer had moved off, and was talking to a lady. Antonio stretched himself, and wondered what he could do to pass the time.

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Stifling a yawn, he walked up to Lina von Podewils, and drew a chair to her own.

Lina's face grew radiant; she turned to Antonio, a welcoming smile upon her lips. Franz, watching her, frowned heavily.

There was little, however, in the conversation which ensued, that need have aroused the boy's alarm.

Antonio was silent for a moment, and played with his sword.

"How's Karl?" he asked at length, looking up.

The smile faded on Lina's face. "Karl is quite well," she said. She had forgotten Karl, forgotten her soldier lover, forgotten him utterly, till Antonio spoke his name.

"Who is the lady who is singing now?"

"A Signorina Bellini. She is Venetian."

"She sings very badly." Antonio made a movement of impatience.

"Upon my word"—Lina laughed—"you are more candid than flattering in your observations about my friends."

"Flattering! Oh, I never flatter. But I'm a little spoiled for singing, I suppose. You know whom I have been accustomed to hear. Virginie Tonais sang—oh, Lina!—you'll let me call you Lina, won't you?—I'd give all the world to be listening to Virginie singing now."

Lina's face changed. The song came to an end. Antonio sighed, this time a sigh of relief.

"Are you not going to play?"

"Not to-night, I think."

"What a pity! You must know that you play exquisitely."

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Once more silence. Franz could not but congratulate himself, as he watched the pair, upon the frequent pauses in their conversation.

"I say"—Antonio looked up—"I hate these musical parties."

"You do?"

"Yes, I do. I can find no amusement in them. I came here to-night to get the memory of Virginie out of my head, and I think of her more than ever. One has nothing to do here but to think. Why don't you give a dance? A dance would be more entertaining than all this bad music, badly sung and badly played."

"Are you fond of dancing?"

"Trust me. Do give a ball, Lina—that is, do persuade Madame von Podewils to give one. My mother talks of having a dance before summer in her own house, but she intends to wait till my father comes home. I am impatient. We might get up a ball here before then. Won't you persuade your mother, Lina? You haven't told me whether I may call you Lina, by-the-bye."

"I'll try. Yes, you may call me Lina."

The girl's face flushed.

"You must give me the first dance, then?" Antonio bent his head down close to Lina, and his voice was deep and soft.

"Yes." The answer came in a delighted whisper.

"Good child! Now, see, your mother is coming. She wants you to play. Do play, please—do. We require some consolation for all the wretched music which we have heard to-night. Let me take you to the piano."

Antonio took her. She sat down very happy, as she

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noticed that Antonio composed himself to remain beside the piano while she played. "If he only, for this one night at least, will not talk any more of Virginie, I shall be content," she murmured to herself.

"Shall I tell you something?" Antonio bent over the piano.

"If you will."

"You are looking prettier to-night than I ever saw you look before."

Antonio laughed deprecatingly, half thinking that his speech would be considered an impertinence.

But Lina did not resent it. Her face crimsoned; her eyes were fixed on the notes of the piano.

She played gloriously. She did not choose those quaint old German tunes which Karl loved well; she played, in preference, Italian operatic music. She composed variations for herself as she went on. Antonio hung over her, and listened to every note. Lina saw his face change as the music changed; for a few minutes she had him in her power; his mood was gay or serious, at her will, as her strain varied. Her thoughts ran back to a day not long ago—when she had played thus in his mother's house—when he had paid no heed to the music, but had strayed out on the balcony to talk to Virginie. She remembered her own rage—remembered how Karl, in his simplicity, had been unable to account for her petulance.

"Thank you, a thousand times. What a magnificent musician you are! And now good-bye. I must go, I think."

"Go already? It's very early."

Antonio could not but see the look of disappointment

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which crept over Lina's face; he wondered what had brought it there. But he answered, with very little politeness—

"Yes, I am going. What is there to wait for? Good night."

"Good night. I'll try and persuade my mother about the dance."

"The dance?" Antonio stared. "Oh! ah! yes, I remember, to be sure. That's right. Let us have something to wake us up. Good night again."

"What a stupid affair, this reception!" Antonio muttered as he hastened down the stairs, in company with his friend the officer, whom he had persuaded to leave with him. "Not a soul in the place worth speaking to."

"I don't know," returned his friend. "I found some agreeable people enough; and I fancied that you were enjoying your conversation with the Signorina von Podewils. She is handsome, Antonio; and she plays divinely. I have been wondering whether, in due course of time, she might fill Virginie Tonais' vacant place in the Signor Antonio's affections, eh?"

"Just hold your tongue about Mademoiselle Tonais, and her place in my affections, or in anyone's else; d'ye hear?"

Antonio had come to the bottom of the stairs now, and he turned round, his hand upon the street door. "I don't intend to discuss Mademoiselle Tonais—you are mighty free with her Christian name, by-the-bye—or the Signorina von Podewils either, for your edification, I can tell you."

"Oh! come, come. No offence was meant, Antonio."

"As for thinking Lina von Podewils worthy to be named

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in the same day with Virginie Tonais, no one but a fool would dream of such an absurdity. Besides, you know very well that Lina von Podewils is betrothed to her cousin, Karl Kaiserling."

"I know something else."

"What?"

"That Lina von Podewils is in love with you, Antonio."

"With me! Bah!"

"I am sure of the fact. The girl's manner betrays her. And I'll tell you who else is of my opinion—that crippled fellow—what's his name?—Franz, Karl's brother. The boy watches Lina like an ogre; his eyes were never off her while she was speaking to you this evening. He has discovered her secret."

"Secret! Fiddlesticks! You are a more tiresome gossip than that queen of tittle-tattlers, Madame von Podewils herself. Lina doesn't care a pin for me, and I don't care a fragment of a pin's head for Lina. Here we are at my home. You are bound for the Vatican, I suppose. I am not on guard there till next week. Good night."

Antonio mounted the staircase of his house. His friend had suggested a new idea to his mind. Antonio did not believe the statement which he had just heard, but he thought about it all the time that he smoked his last cigar before retiring to rest.

"Lina von Podewils is undoubtedly an attractive girl," he murmured, as he composed himself on his pillows. "And she has a rare talent for music," he continued, as he blew out his light. Then he sank to sleep, and dreamed of Virginie.

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The days went on. The great ceremonies of Passion Week, the rejoicings at Easter, were things of the past.

Antonio was lounging one morning upon a staircase in that small portion of the Vatican inhabited by the Pope. A letter was put into his hands.

He opened it, and found it to be an invitation to a ball which was to take place in about ten days' time, in the house of Madame von Podewils.

There came the sound of heavy footsteps ascending the stairs.

Antonio saw the Pope's Cardinal Secretary of State, who had rooms above the Pontifical apartments. He was trudging now to his own domain, having just quitted the Pope. Antonio saluted him as he approached.

The cardinal paused a moment to indulge in a chat with the young officer. He was so fond of a gossip that he often brought himself to make conversation with Antonio; though, to tell the truth, he liked Antonio less than any other member of the Noble Guard. Now Antonio was a great favourite with his Holiness. The young man's careless, almost disrespectful manner sometimes offended the cardinal; that very carelessness somewhat pleased the Pope. Antonio never troubled to ask a favour of his Holiness, never beset him with wearisome attentions.

"You have an invitation in your hand?" The cardinal laid his own hand on Antonio's arm.

"Yes, to a ball at Madame von Podewils'. Is your Excellency invited?"

"I never attend balls. Surely you know that." The cardinal drew himself up.

"Ah! yes. What am I dreaming of? Well, I dare say

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you're right. If you did go, you'd only look on, I suppose, and bore yourself, no doubt. You couldn't dance, could you? Your petticoats would be in the way."

Petticoats! Dance! No single word did the cardinal reply. He looked for a moment aghast at the young man's freedom of speech. He sailed up the stairs; glared from the top at Antonio below; then passed in dignified silence into his own apartments.

Antonio laughed. He knew that he was the only officer in the guard who would dare to pass jokes upon so exalted and powerful a person as the Pope's Cardinal Secretary of State.

The evening of Madame von Podewils' ball came. The cardinal was not present, but Antonio was. He arrived late. Lina had been watching for him all the evening, and had began to doubt whether he intended to come at all. Her face brightened when he appeared. Antonio remembered the assertion made about Lina by his friend, the member of the Noble Guard. He looked about to see whether that friend was present. Yes, he stood near, and saluted Antonio with a nod.

"You are not engaged for all the dances, I hope," said Antonio to Lina.

"No." To tell the truth, Lina had kept herself disengaged in hope of Antonio's arrival.

Round the room the two floated, to the strains of delicious music. Lina was lost in a happy dream; she knew only that Antonio was beside her—that it was his low voice which sounded in her ear as they glided on together.

Lina danced beautifully. Antonio danced well too, and

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was monstrously particular in his choice of a partner. Lina suited him very well; he engaged her for the rest of the evening, and danced with no one else.

He amused himself with making her one or two little tender speeches, that had no particular meaning; he shot upon her one or two ardent glances from his dark eyes. Lazily amused with things in general looked those eyes to-night.

But presently Antonio grew tired. "It's hot in this room," he says. "Where can we find a cool place?"

"Here, on this balcony."

"Won't you be afraid to sit there? Don't catch malaria fever, or something dreadful."

"Not I. Let us come."

And the two moved off to a balcony—cool, spacious, flowery—a balcony which suggested flirtation plainly as ever balcony suggested yet.

For a few minutes Antonio stood over Lina's chair; he talked soft, pleasant nonsense, in a low voice. But at length he turned away, leaned his hands upon the balcony rails, gazed out upon the tranquil night, and his thoughts flew to Virginie. Where was she then?

The hour of three clangs out from a church tower. There is not another sound. Not even a dog stirs in the wide court below; a great silence rests on all around.

Within the house, in the crowded ball-room, is noise and merriment.

"She is sleeping now, my Virginie," mused Antonio. "Does she dream of me? Does she, in her waking hours, ever realise how fondly, how constantly I think of her?"

Antonio's face grew very thoughtful.

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"Is she happy, my darling? Does she regret Rome? Does she regret me? She told me she never loved me. Did she speak the truth? Her tears, her often-expressed sorrow for her inability to enter my Church, seemed to tell a different tale.

"My Church! What is it? A gross imposture, or the only true, the only living, the only infallible Church? I, for one, know not.

"My Virginie! my Virginie!" Antonio dwelt long on those proud words of proprietorship. "Sleep well, my love! My little Virginie, my Protestant darling! We may perhaps never meet again; but thou art mine, nevertheless—mine, by the right of my great love."

Antonio did not move or stir. Half-an-hour passed by. He was still lost in thought; his eyes gazed out into vacancy.

A step came on the balcony. Franz appeared. Antonio looked up. He suddenly remembered that Lina was there, and that he had said no word to her all the time. He reproached himself for his rudeness.

"Lina," said Franz, "my aunt is asking for you." Lina looked towards Antonio before she moved off; she received an admiring glance from his eyes, and her own eyes dropped, half guiltily.

"And now, Signior Antonio"—the boy waited till Lina was out of hearing, then he came forward, grasped the balcony railing with one hand, and turned to the young man a face pale with anger—"I must say a few words to you, please."

"Say on." Antonio raised himself from his stooping position.

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"Do you know that my cousin Lina is betrothed to my brother Karl?"

The question was so unexpected that Antonio laughed in surprise.

"Yes. What then?"

"Do you know that my brother Karl is the grandest soldier in our grand Prussian army, the worthiest man, the truest patriot?"

"He is a capital fellow, I know. Well?"

"You dance to-night with Lina, and no one but Lina. You spend a whole half-hour—I have watched the clock—alone with Lina on this balcony. People are talking about your exclusiveness, your marked attentions to Lina."

"Are they?"

"And how much do you care, I wonder?"

"Not at all. Let them talk."

"Signor Antonio, listen to me. You are acting shamefully—yes, I say, shamefully." The boy's face flushed hotly; his eyes glared up into Antonio's. "Lina admires you; you know that she admires you. If you left her in peace, she might learn in time to forget you; but you begin this evening to assail her with attentions. Now Karl loves Lina—loves her with his whole true heart—loves her with a strong, quiet love, whose depths your hot, fickle, southern nature could never understand. Is it honourable, is it manly, to wait till Karl is far away, and then, and not till then, to enter the lists as his rival for Lina's favour? You monstrously soon console yourself for the loss of Virginie, Signor Antonio. Bah! When I remember that not three months ago you professed to be devoted to Virginie, I feel——"

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The boy paused for breath. Antonio did not for a moment reply. "Lina admires you; you know that she admires you," Franz had said. "Everyone tells me the same tale," thought Antonio.

"Your conduct is dishonourable, it is cowardly, it is——"

Again Franz paused, more for want of breath than words.

"What else, Franz?" An amused smile flickered on Antonio's lips.

"You laugh at me." Franz set his face rigidly. He was silent for a while. At last, with a great effort, he changed his tone; his eyes no longer flashed angrily; he spoke in a persuasive voice.

"Will you promise me something, Signor Antonio?"

"What?"

"To try and conquer your rising fancy for Lina. Be true to Karl. When you meet Lina in society, don't single her out as the only lady with whom you deign to talk. Remember always that she is betrothed to my brother Karl, and don't subject her to remark by the devotedness of your attentions.

Antonio laughed. He might have set Franz's mind at rest by a simple declaration of the truth that he cared little for Lina—that he had not forgotten, and would never forget, Virginie. He might have given the promise to refrain from special attentions to Lina—ay, and have kept the promise, too—at little cost to himself.

But Antonio had a boyish love of teasing. He saw that Franz was excited, and it amused him to increase the excitement.

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He leaned over the balcony, and tossed a heap of orange and myrtle leaves into the street below.

"You are a little impertinent, my child," he said. "You meddle in affairs which don't concern you."

"Will you promise?"

"Do you see that old priest passing in the street? Ten to one that I hit the tassel on his hat with this myrtle twig. Missed! Ah! I have grown a noodle. Promise? No, I won't promise, Mr. Franz. Miss Lina is a charming girl; I shall speak to her as long and as often as I like. Hullo! here comes the priest back again. Aim at his tassel too. Here's a twig of——"

Franz rushed from the balcony in a rage. Antonio laughed an amused laugh. But presently he sighed a weary sigh, yawned, returned to the ball-room, bade good night to Madame von Podewils, and then left the house. Franz did not see him go. He was in his own room, crying bitterly.

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CHAP. VIII.—FROM ROME TO SWITZERLAND.

IN a large old Swiss house, upon the road leading from Martigny to the Great St. Bernard, a certain Swiss mother knelt one night, about twenty-five years before Father Francesco's departure from Rome, beside the bed of a sick child. With the tenderness which only mothers know, she had nursed the child through a long illness. Now it seemed that all her care, her nursing, her tenderness were unavailing. Death stared the little one in the face.

He was a pretty child, just four years of age. His eyes—pretty, big, brown eyes—had in them an unchild-like gravity; pretty, brown locks fell about his face.

His mother—poor soul!—hung over him wistfully. He was her all. "To quote the compassionate words of the most compassionate of books, the child was 'the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.'"

"Merciful Mary! Dear mother, hear a mother! Spare me my treasure."

Through the gloom came no answer, and it seemed that death drew nearer.

"Spare him, and I vow—hear me vow!—that I will devote his life to thy service. If he live to be a man, he shall be a priest in thy Church."

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When the day broke, it seemed to the watchful mother that a change for the better had come over the boy. She was right. From that day his recovery commenced; before many weeks he was restored to health.

The mother—she was known as Madame Borel—did not forget her vow. That vow, breathed over a sick-bed in the terrible night-time, was solemn and binding to her.

The child grew to boyhood, with the knowledge that his life was a promised one—promised to the Church.

At an early age he was sent to be educated at a Jesuits' college in North Italy. A studious, dreamy boy he proved. He cared little for the sports of his companion scholars; his chief delight was to read and ponder over church legends. The thought of the destiny awaiting him pleased him greatly. "Oh, to be a priest, a worthy priest!" He was impressed by the grandeur of the Church which he was to serve; he knew nothing of its hidden littleness.

At college he made great progress; he gave more than satisfaction to the professors who taught him. In secular, as well as religious knowledge, he distinguished himself. Especially he was proficient in modern languages.

"Take your boy from college, sister mine," wrote to Madame Borel, when the lad was fifteen years of age, her brother, a Monsieur Rimon—"and send him to me. I have established myself in a farm, about ten miles from Avignon. In the superintendence of this farm I need assistance. My good wife and I have, alas! no son to give that assistance. Let me have your boy. I will bring him up as my own—will make him heir to all that I have. I hear some talk of your designing him for the priest-

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hood. Give up so ridiculous a notion. I hate priests. Tell my nephew, with my loving greeting, to keep clear of all the crew. My wife joins me in salutations.—Believe me to be your devoted brother, JEAN RIMON."

Now Monsieur Jean Rimon was, be it known, a thriving, money-getting, able man. His offer to the widow was a tempting one; but it was refused.

The boy reached man's estate.

Solemn words were pronounced over him. He became a priest. His mother lived to hear him preach his first sermon, a sermon which called forth the congratulations of all her neighbours. Soon afterwards she died.

While a boy the priest had often dreamed of Rome. "Sacred Rome! I must see Rome," he had said. "And afterwards I must go to Palestine."

One of his dreams was realised. He went to Rome. We knew him there as Father Francesco.

When, for reasons which we have seen, he left Rome, he came to his birth-place. About a mile from his little church, upon that familiar road from Martigny to the Great St. Bernard, stood the old house where he was born, where his mother made her vow. In a small cemetery near the church were two graves, bearing inscriptions to the memory of "Francois and Marie Borel," the priest's parents. The village to which the church belonged is a lovely one. It stands among the magnificent mountains which enclose the Val de Bagnes. For some inscrutable reason, lovers of Alpine scenery frequent this beautiful district of Switzerland less than other parts of the country. The mountains of Bagnes are superb. From Father Francesco's church the snowy dome of the

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Vélau is distinctly seen. "The Vélau," writes a member of our English Alpine Club, "owes its excellence as a point of view to its comparatively isolated position, and to its situation between the great masses of Mont Blanc and Monte Rosa. From nowhere else in Switzerland can so fine a panorama be seen with so little expenditure of time and labour."

All these beauties Father Francesco knew well. When a little lad of twelve years he had ascended the Vélau, had seen from thence the whole range of Mont Blanc in its unapproachable magnificence. Mountain storms, with their wild grandeur, were familiar to him.

The dignitaries of the Roman Church did not let the young priest go from Rome without some doubt as to the advisability of the step. Old cardinals had done him the honour of discussing his movements; *monsignori* and *canoni* of St. Peter's itself had cackled over him in spare moments after morning and afternoon service. They had made themselves acquainted with his rare gift of eloquence—eloquence of which all Rome talked; they recognised the purity and devotedness of his life. But they knew that, for some reason or another, he had been eminently desirous of leaving the capital of the Pope's States.

Men high in authority in the Church determined that Father Francesco's wonderful talents should not be hidden under a bushel. He was not to remain in the quiet Swiss village to which he had fled, but was soon to join a band of missionaries to some heretical country—England, perhaps, and afterwards Prussia. A knowledge of foreign languages was, as we have seen, one of the

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young priest's accomplishments. Prize upon prize, for accuracy in German, in English, in Italian, he had borne away as a boy from his Jesuit college; his proud mother had heard whispers, too, of his partial knowledge of Spanish and Portuguese. He prepared now for his tour in England, by preaching often in English in his church to English tourists. Sermons are not often given in Romanist churches—had been seldom heard in this remote village, until Father Francesco came to it.

But Father Francesco was an exceptional priest. Every Sunday morning he preached to his own congregation in his own tongue and theirs—French. Every Sunday afternoon he gave an English sermon. It was early in the season for English tourists, still, many were already in Switzerland. Numbers of these travellers—Protestants as well as Romanists—came to hear the priest. His name became known; his eloquence was admired.

He led a studious life. He worked hard among his Valaisan poor; but he found time to read English and German, and to keep up his knowledge of Italian. He wrote learned treatises; he held correspondence with priests in many countries.

Had he forgotten Rome? Had he forgotten Virginie? A thousand times no. When his day's work was done, and he wandered in the bright April evening light up and down a little garden which adjoined his house, his thoughts flew back to Rome. He thought how grandly the golden sunset was gilding the dome of St. Peter's; he thought how solemn, how beautiful the queen of cities lay under the evening sky. Dear, venerable Rome! he loved its memory. Instead of St. Peter's, he saw snow-

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crowned mountains—saw in the distance the home where he had been first promised to the Church.

He thought of Virginie; he could not do otherwise than think of her; he had fled to Switzerland to chase her from his memory, and he remembered her as fondly among his wild mountains as even in Rome itself. He wondered where she was—what her mode of life was.

When Lent came, the priest's work increased. During Passion Week he preached daily. He spared himself no labour. But even while he delivered his sermons, his thoughts strayed to the Passion Week which he had passed the year before in Rome.

On Wednesday in Passion Week he preached in English in his little church. He knew well that that very afternoon—that very hour—the "Miserere" service was being held in the Sistine Chapel.

In spirit he was there. He seemed to stand, as he stood last year, in that famous chapel. He saw the rays of the sinking sun fall on Michael Angelo's masterpiece, the picture of the "Last Judgment." Upon the clouds in that picture sits the great Judge; His apostles and His mother are stretching out their hands to Him, and imploring compassion for the race of man. Blessed spirits are soaring upward; the doomed are meeting their terrible fate. These are the scenes depicted in the picture.

"In the chapel the Holy Father has ascended his throne. Young priests stand before him, bearing lighted tapers. Breaking profound silence, low, mournful voices chant the 'Miserere.' One by one the lights are extinguished. The Father of the Church, stripped of his Papal pomp, stands before the altar and prays to the Holy Cross, and

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upon the wings of the trumpet responds the trembling choir, *Populus meus, quid feci tibi.* Soft angel notes rise above the deep song, tones which seem not to ascend from a human breast; they are like the weeping of angels dissolved in melody." *

Father Francesco saw the whole scene vividly, as though it were really passing before his eyes. His heart yearned after the Rome which he had left.

He preached with fervour. In the harsh, foreign tongue, which he had not mastered without difficulty, it was hard for him to be eloquent. But he was eloquent, nevertheless.

He preached of the marvellous suffering, the marvellous love which the solemn week commemorated. And as he preached, a flood of intense feeling surged up in his heart —a very woman's heart for tenderness—and his voice broke.

In the church were several English persons, and a few Swiss English-speaking members of Father Francesco's congregation.

A young English girl, standing in a corner with an old, grey-headed man, her father, never took her eyes from the priest while he preached; she listened, spell-bound. When the sermon was over, she drew a long breath, and a quick colour came to her cheeks.

"What preaching!" she said, in a half-awed voice, as she turned to her father. "What would I not give to hear such sometimes in England?"

"Hum! He has a strong foreign accent, this fellow," replied the old man, a true Briton in his contempt for everything not altogether British. "We had better make

* Hans Andersen.

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our way out of the church, Alice." And the young priest and his sermon were dismissed from the Briton's mind.

"Oh! one moment, one moment!" pleaded the girl. "I cannot go yet. This morning you wanted to pay a visit to that Swiss gentleman who spoke to you yesterday in the hotel. Can you not go to him now, and call for me on your way back?"

"What do you want to wait here for?"

"I have a fancy to stay."

The old man shrugged his shoulders, and made his way out of the open door. The girl crept along the darkened church. She paused before a coarsely-painted picture of the Crucifixion. Drawing towards her a chair, she sat down, buried her face in her hands, and thought. She thought of the sermon which she had heard—thought of the wonderful story, so familiar, and yet so ever-strange, of which it treated—thought, most of all, of the priest who preached, of his earnest face, his thrilling voice. "He has the high, unearthly look of Christian martyrs in Italian pictures," she told herself.

Looking round, she saw the priest approaching. He came up; in another moment he would have passed her. A strange longing to speak to him seized her.

"*Pardon, mon père,*" she said, rising; "can you tell me the name of the artist to whom we owe this picture? All the other pictures in the church have been covered during Lent. I am anxious to know who painted this one." She spoke in bad French; she was foolishly anxious to make a show of whatever knowledge she possessed of a language not her own.

The priest, very politely, answered in the same tongue

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which the girl spoke. "The picture," he said, "is modern. It was painted by a poor artist—a deaf and dumb lad—who lives among the mountains. It has little to recommend it as a work of art. Has mademoiselle perhaps seen any of the grand pictures in Italian churches?"

"Yes, I have been in Italy. I have seen all the celebrated pictures in Roman churches. Oh, father!"—the girl's colour rose; in her earnestness she relapsed into her own language, English—"I want to thank you, if I may, for the glorious sermon which you have just given us."

The priest looked down on the young face raised to his. It would have been a plain face, but for its changing colour, and its deep-set, true eyes.

"Are you a Catholic, my child?" Father Francesco asked, in a kind voice, and he too now spoke in English.

"No—that is—that is——"

"Is what?" The priest bent down inquiringly.

"Your religion attracts me powerfully. Your sermon has—oh, father! I cannot tell you how your sermon has affected me. I do not believe that I—that any Protestant—could hear you preach often on tenets of Roman Catholic faith, and remain a Protestant still."

A shade crossed the priest's face. "You are wrong, my daughter," he said, sadly. "I lack eloquence to lay before my hearers the doctrines of our grand Church. Not long ago, in Rome, I strove to win a convert to the Church. I strove, and failed. The fault could not have been with the Church; it was with me."

With sorrowfully drooping head, the priest moved on.

The girl's father came bustling into the church.

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"That Swiss fellow wasn't at home, Alice; so I am back quickly, you see. Hullo! I beg pardon." The Englishman had knocked up against the priest. "You keep your church so dark, that it's difficult to see where one is going. Oh, by-the-bye, you're the man who preached, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"You must come to England, my good fellow, if you want to get rid of that abominable accent of yours; you must come to England, and mix with Englishmen. Must he not, Alice?"

The priest glanced at the speaker. He saw a short, fussy Englishman, of the Manchester school. In a Manchester house of business the Englishman had gained great wealth. He was spending some of it now in a foreign tour.

"I am coming to England before long." The priest moved out of the church with the Englishman and his daughter.

"Not to preach, I hope. We don't want any Popish attempts to pervert our countrymen. We've had enough of such attempts already."

No answer. The three walked together along a mountain path leading to a little inn.

"I say." The Englishman paused as he reached the inn, and he looked at the priest. "You have been fasting tremendously through Lent, I'll bet a guinea. You are pale as a ghost, and thin as a shadow."

The priest smiled. "I am very well," he said. "I have not injured my health, however severely I may have kept Lent."

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"I'm not so sure. Now look here. Come into the inn with me, and I'll give you a dinner—not such a one as we would have in England, but an eatable affair, nevertheless. The people here know how to make soups, and they have very fair meats and wines. You had better come."

Meats and wines on Wednesday in Passion Week! The priest declined the invitation, in very decided voice.

"Good day, sir; good day, mademoiselle," he then said; and, lifting his hat, he passed on.

"Strange people, these English," he murmured, as he made his way to his own house.

The next day—Holy Thursday—he was up betimes. After early mass, he took a turn in the cemetery where "Francois and Marie Borel" lay buried. The morning sun shone on black crosses, which marked the graves of Swiss peasants—shone on tawdry paper flowers, on rusty lamps, on blackened wreaths of immortelles, on faded pictures of saints. The priest walked on, little heeding these things. He had in his hand a well-worn Latin book; he bent his head over it, and read assiduously. Looking up at last, he saw approaching him the English girl to whom he had spoken the night before.

"You here, and so early, mademoiselle!" he said, as he raised his hat.

"I often come to the cemetery in the early morning. I like the great quiet here. I like to see the sun rise over those hills. And these quaint crosses, these queer little pictures, all these tawdry decorations, are so unlike anything that one sees in an English churchyard, that the very novelty of the place charms me."

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The priest bowed. He looked wistfully at his book; he was anxious to resume his reading. But the girl seemed to wish to talk.

"You were not offended, I hope, with anything which my father said yesterday. His manners are rather rough, but he has the best heart in the world."

"I was not offended in the least."

Then there was silence, and the priest made a movement as if to walk on. The girl, seeing this, walked on too.

"When will you come to England?"

"In about a month, probably."

"I hope that we shall meet there."

"I hope so."

"We live near Manchester. Will anything take you in that direction?"

"I am ashamed to say that I hardly know what is the direction of Manchester. I am going to London."

"Well, perhaps we shall meet in London. My father and I come to town sometimes."

The priest bowed again. Then he stooped to replace a wreath which had fallen from a cross—a wreath whose fresh brightness spoke of love not yet grown cold. A young Swiss peasant girl had laid this offering on the grave of her lover. Very reverently the priest touched both flowers and cross.

"We don't spend much time in London. I hate London."

"Indeed!" The priest smiled at the speaker's impetuosity.

"I'll tell you why." The girl's young, candid English

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face looked up at Father Francesco. "We are not in what is called good society in London."

Again the priest smiled—this time because he did not know how to answer.

"We live in a grand house, and have grand carriages and servants. But grand people in town don't care to know us. Why, even in our Manchester house, Phœbe Weston often lets us know that she thinks us, in spite of our money, a little beneath her. We made our money—that is, father made his money—in trade."

Phœbe Weston! Who on earth was Phœbe Weston? "A strangely communicative young lady this," thought the priest, but he said nothing.

"I have an elder sister, who married a baronet belonging to a fine old English family. His name is Felix Hilton. My sister looks down upon us now."

Hilton was the name of the English lady with whom Virginie Tonais left Rome.

The priest stood still. For the first time, he spoke in a tone of real interest.

"Is Lady Hilton your sister?"

"Yes. Do you know her?"

"Is she now in Florence?"

"She was when I last heard from her. That was a little while ago. I expect another letter soon. Do you know my sister?"

"I—I—was presented to her in Rome. I know, also, a governess whom she engaged there."

"Indeed! Well, I dare say that you will see my sister too in England."

"I hope so." The priest's voice was quite animated.

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"If you will allow me, I will give myself the pleasure of calling on you in London, mademoiselle. Will you tell me your name?"

Father Francesco had come to Switzerland to forget Virginie, yet his heart bounded at the prospect of seeing her with Lady Hilton in England. He sighed as he thought how inconsistent he was.

"My name is Alice Dashwood."

The priest and his companion walked slowly round the cemetery in silence. When they came to the gate leading back to the village, Father Francesco paused. "I must go now. Good day, Miss Dashwood."

The girl did not hear. She was absorbed in thought.

"You mentioned yesterday," she said, and she coloured a little, "a fruitless effort which you made in Rome to convert some one to your faith. Was that some one—a—a—lady?"

"Yes."

"Was she—you will think me very inquisitive; I am always inquisitive, I fear—was she young?"

"Yes." Then, with a bow, the priest moved off.

"Young—perhaps no older than I am, and she withstood this man's persuasions," said the girl to herself, as she sank upon a grave to rest. She sat long, thinking. She thought of the priest; she recalled every line on his sensitive face; she heard again every word which he had said to her in his earnest voice.

The sun came out, burning, brilliant. The girl never moved.

"What a wonderful face his is!" she murmured. What an odd thrill his voice gives me! I can fancy how grand

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would be his arguments in defence of his creed. And yet this girl resisted him!"

"When shall I see him again! I must hear him preach his next sermon in the little church! Dear little church! What would"—the girl smiled a merry smile—"what would Phœbe Weston say to hear me call a Romanist chapel 'dear'!"

Poor, dreaming child! In the tones of Father Francesco's voice she has found a strange magic.

"This girl resisted him," she murmured again. "I wonder who she was."

The hours passed. The sun rose high. Not till the church clock struck twelve did Alice Dashwood recognise the length of time which she had spent in the cemetery. She rose hastily, and made her way back to the hotel.

In the afternoon she walked out with her father. When evening came she sang to him, as was her nightly custom; but she stumbled often, forgetting both the words and the music of her songs.

"What are you thinking of, Alice?" asked her father. "I never heard you make such blunders in singing as you make to-night."

The girl blushed, and was silent. She was thinking of the priest.

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CHAP. IX.—COMING EVENTS CAST SHADOWS BEFORE.

A COOL, spacious garden, the garden surrounding Madame von Podewils' house.

A true Italian garden, with melancholy olive trees, with stone terraces, with crumbling, ruined steps, with flowering shrubs and trailing creepers, with a general air of decay and neglect, with here and there a profusion of wild flowers growing among badly-kept turf—everything picturesque; nothing orderly.

Lina von Podewils had thrown herself upon a bed of grass, tall weeds, ferns, and wild flowers. She was weeping her heart out under the shade of the mournful olive trees.

April had passed. May came, and brought with it May heat. The sun blazed down upon sleepy Rome—blazed down upon the flat, scorched, desolate Campagna, where white, dusty roads trailed along to the tempting mountains.

The little town of Frascati, standing among green trees on the hills, seemed to beckon from across the burned-up Campagna to sojourners in Rome to come and enjoy cool shade. Beautiful Tivoli, too, was distinctly

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seen from Rome; then there were Albano, Roca di Papa, and other retreats from the summer heat.

The Marchesa del Palmello would not leave the town till the end of June. Then she intended to betake herself to a villa of her own near Ostia. Her husband was to join her there; her son Antonio would come when he could command time. Madame von Podewils would also remain in Rome till late in June. Then she would take some apartments in the neighbourhood of Ostia, to be within easy reach of her friend, the marchesa.

Grand days those May ones in the Eternal City—days of cloudless skies, of glorious suns. Old folk tottered out, and basked at street doors; the great sun-god gave them a new lease of life. Only at midday the town slept drowsily; every morning and evening it awoke; the streets were thronged; bands of music appeared; stalls, at which iced drinks were sold, were besieged; the houses were deserted.

Yes, May was here—May in the year 1815. But one month would pass, and then over Europe would be wafted the whisper of a wild combat.

Early in March all Europe had been convulsed by the tidings of Napoleon's escape from Elba.

For France, was fast drawing near a day black with the shadow of death. For Prussia, for England, a day of bereavement was coming fast.

For Prussia! No thought of Prussia's coming conflict was in Lina von Podewils' mind as she lay under the olives, and wept passionately. It was no thought of Karl's share in any conflict which drew the burning drops from her eyes.

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Prussia, in alliance with Russia and England, had armed herself to resist Napoleon; but Karl's regiment was not among the first called into action.

"Antonio!" The name came from her lips.

For some short time after Franz Kaiserling's remonstrance, Antonio chose to divert himself by a furious flirtation with Lina. He meant no treachery to Karl, neither did he entertain any real affection for Karl's betrothed. But Rome was dull, and Antonio found that his attentions to Lina relieved the monotony of his life. Franz's jealous rage continued. This rage vastly amused Antonio, and excited him to persevere in his flirtation. Then there came a time when Franz could no longer bear to hide his fears from his brother. He wrote a long letter to Karl; he told him of the state of things between Antonio and Lina. But upon a sudden a great change took place. Antonio appeared to avoid Lina; his show of devotion ceased. Franz wondered, and secretly rejoiced; he tore up his letter to Karl, and the young Prussian soldier was not informed of his brother's forebodings on his account.

To speak plainly, Antonio had at last begun to suspect that Lina cared more for him than he at first supposed. The suspicion troubled him; it had come to him slowly, and now caused him some self-reproach.

So he resigned his position as Lina's constant attendant. He did more. He assumed a studiously indifferent manner whenever he met her in society. He must not, he told himself, usurp the affection which was Karl's by right. Franz's spirits rose. Lina wrote seldom to Karl. Karl in his letters reproached her gently for her long

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silence, but his faithful heart entertained no doubt of the faith of his darling.

Birds were singing overhead in the olive branches beneath which Lina lay prone. The trees stirred in a soft breeze. Lina had come here for the very purpose of seeking relief for her heavy heart in a passion of tears. No one, she assured herself, would disturb her; no one could see her here. Her mother was spending the day in Albano; Franz was in bed with a slight feverish attack. Lina had the house, the garden, to herself.

The night before, she met Antonio at an evening assembly. He had appeared completely oblivious of her presence. His coldness cut her to the heart. She knew that she was very wrong and very untrue to Karl when she encouraged Antonio's attentions, but the indifference which now succeeded those attentions seemed more than she could bear. She buried her weary head among the leaves, and her sobs came fast.

A lovely day was drawing to a close. Behind the glowing dome of St. Peter's the sun sank low. The tender hour of twilight was here—hour in which, as the soft "Ave Maria" bell would shortly remind Rome, the wonderful "Annunciation" is believed to have been made to the most honoured of Jewish maidens.

Lina wept on. A step was heard. Hastily Lina sprang to her feet. She choked back her tears, and smoothed her disordered hair.

Antonio came up. Antonio, of all people in the world! For a moment Lina thought of rushing to the house—of leaving Antonio alone among the olives. What would he think of her tear-stained face? But in another moment

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"What?"

"Not to cry any more till I see you again."

"When will that be?"

Antonio hesitated. "I will call to-morrow, if you will let me."

Lina was silent. But in spite of herself her face brightened.

"You won't cry any more till then."

"Oh no. Don't speak again, and don't think again"—the girl's shy eyes were on the ground—"of my foolish fit of tears to-day. It was all about nothing, just nothing at all."

"If I had my way, Lina—won't you look up at me, Lina?"

Slowly, slowly the deep-grey eyes rose to the young man's face. The girl tried to smile in a careless, cheerful fashion.

"If I had my way, Lina"—Antonio leaned his shoulder against the frame of the door; he looked straight down into the girl's eyes—"if I had my way, Lina, you should never shed one tear again."

Silence. Lina stood motionless, her hands folded, her eyelashes caressing her hot cheeks.

At last she spoke. "I must go to my mother now. Good-bye. I think you said that you couldn't come in."

"Not worth while. I must be off to the Vatican in a few minutes. Stay those few minutes here with me, Lina."

The girl obeyed. She was very quiet. The deep sea of her love lay within her breast, calm and tranquil after its late tempest.

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Antonio never lifted his eyes from Lina's face. "I haven't seen you to speak to for a long time," he said at length, in a soft whisper; "we have met at one or two dull evening receptions—last night's affair, for instance—but we have hardly had a minute's talk together, have we?"

He came nearer. He bent close over Lina.

Whose fault was the silence of which he complained? His own. He had purposely refrained from speaking much to Lina. His motive was her own peace. Why was he now undoing his own work?

"Have you missed me a little, Lina?"

The compassion in the rich, falling voice pained Lina again. Did he, perhaps, guess the real cause of her tears? Did he dare to pity her for her devotion to him? The bare thought maddened her. She looked up bold in a moment.

"Well, not very much. We have had more visitors in Rome than is usual at this time of year. I have made many pleasant acquaintances."

Antonio laughed. He did not believe her.

"Good night, child. Good-bye till to-morrow."

"Good night."

"Lina"—Antonio's arm crept round the girl—"I must give you one kiss before I go."

Kiss! The last kiss which ever a man had pressed upon her lips was Karl's. "Good-bye, dear; don't forget me," Karl had said. He seemed to rise now before Lina—pale, sad, with reproachful eyes.

Before she could resist, before she could utter one angry word of remonstrance, Antonio bent quickly down and touched her lips with his own. Then he moved off.

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Lina went slowly up the stairs, her face in a glow, a world of indignation, wonder, doubt in her breast. But through the indignation, wonder, doubt, came a strange, troubled joy.

"Does Antonio love me a little?" she asked herself. "Was it perhaps a remembrance of Karl, rather than of Virginie, which prompted his late coolness to me?"

On the next day, faithful to his promise, Antonio appeared at Madame von Podewils'. On the next and on the next he was there again. The old, desperate flirtation, which so greatly distressed Franz, was renewed. But Franz knew nothing of it. He was ill with an attack of true Roman fever. Antonio resumed his old attentions to Lina, not so much now to amuse himself as to dissipate Lina's sadness. Strength of character he had none; he was prompted always by the impulse of the moment. Where his present line of conduct would lead him, what must be the end of all this show of devotion, he never troubled to think. For the present, Lina was happy. And Antonio did not tell himself that he was embittering her future, while he gladdened her present. But all the while, deep down in his heart, was a conviction that he was acting unfairly to Karl. Deeper still, in his heart of hearts, was a sense that he was proving himself unworthy the love of Virginie.

The days went on. One afternoon, Lina, wandering in the garden, was making for herself a wreath of wild flowers. She sought a stone bench, beside a low wall; and her busy fingers arranged the flowers, while her thoughts travelled far and fast.

Antonio came up. His shadow crept along the moss-

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grown, ill-kept paths; threw itself now on Lina's bench. The girl looked up at him. She had not heard his approach. But his presence did not surprise her; she had been expecting him.

"Spare me a flower, will you?" he said, leaning his elbow lazily on the back of the bench, and looking down on the litter of Lina's treasures.

"I don't believe that you care for flowers," answered Lina, rather shortly.

"Don't I?" Antonio seated himself on the bench. But Lina rose, and gathered a handful more flowers. Then Antonio stood up too, and looked over the garden wall.

"What a fine view of Rome you have here. I am never tired of admiring it." With a Roman's pride, Antonio gazed over his grand native town. "What a number of churches; let me see—one, two—oh! I can't count them. And there is St. Peter's, towering over all."

Lina came forward. She brought her flowers, placed them upon the wall, and stood beside Antonio. She twined a number of pale cyclamens and dark cyclamen leaves among the coils of her brown hair. Antonio looked on.

"You have no colour to-day, child. Are you well?"

"Quite well."

"And happy?"

"Quite happy." But even as she spoke, Lina sighed. She leaned her elbows on the wall, placed her face in her hands, and looked out over Rome, as Antonio had done. But a film came before her eyes. For some strange, unaccountable reason, she seemed to see, not Rome, but the quaint little German town where she had passed her

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childhood, with her father, her mother, her cousin Karl. The place wore a holiday dress; it lay clearly before her eyes. How gaily the sun shone! How brilliant were the flowers! How joyously rang out the church bells! How blue and bright was the river flowing through the dear old town! And Karl stood where a narrow path led from the old churchyard to some fields—stood, and waved to Lina to follow him.

"Lina," said Antonio, "which of your flowers will you give me?"

The girl woke to consciousness. She turned the blossoms about in her hands.

"Choose, Signor Antonio," she said, coquettishly.

"I have chosen. But call me by my name. *Signor* Antonio, indeed! With me you are always *Lina.*"

"Choose, Antonio," with a shy lowering of the dark eyes.

"I have chosen. I will have one of those cyclamens, one of the very flowers which have touched your hair."

He drew a bud from the thick folds of her hair. Then he brought the flower to his lips and kissed it.

A quick, rustling step was heard. Madame von Podewils was seen. "Have you heard the news?" she cried, long before she reached Antonio and Lina.

"What news?" Lina turned to her mother her flushed face. She spoke in a tone of little interest. Madame von Podewils found almost daily a new piece of gossip. For gossip Lina had little taste.

"You have not heard, or you could not talk in that indifferent voice. The news concerns us nearly."

Madame von Podewils addressed both Antonio and Lina. She was far too excited to give the young man

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any formal greeting, or even to wonder at his presence here.

"What is it, mother?" asked Lina; and her tone changed to an anxious one, for she saw that Madame von Podewils was much agitated.

"Blucher has sent for reinforcements from Prussia. Karl's regiment is ordered to the seat of war."

The re-appearance of Napoleon upon the continent of Europe had not as yet personally affected Lina. Karl had had no part to play in the conflict.

"Karl's regiment!" Lina's flowers dropped at her feet. Of vast political importance to Rome was Napoleon's freedom. But lately he had claimed the right to assume or give the title of King of Rome. Only on the 24th of the previous May—the May of 1814—had the Pope taken repossession of the Eternal City; he had been, in 1809, chased therefrom by the French, under Napoleon. Now that the Corsican was again at large, what would be the fate of the Holy Father?

But Lina had little interest in Pius the Seventh.

"Karl, oh Karl!" she faltered. Then, turning, she made her way to the house, leaving her mother motionless, leaving Antonio speechless, a bewildered look upon his face.

The whole truth came to him too. Lina's low call on Karl's name had reached his ear.

"War for Karl," he said, musingly. Antonio was in the service of the Pope, but a memory of Karl came to the young man's mind before a thought of Pius.

Lina's cyclamen, which he had stolen and kissed, fell from his hand to the ground.

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CHAP. X.—REQUIESCAT IN PACE.

FRANZ soon regained his usual health; but Lina took to her bed, and remained there some days. The girl had a feverish attack. Madame von Podewils wondered what imprudence caused the illness.

Heavily, heavily for Lina, the days went lagging by. Her mother, bustling often into her room, talked of the one subject which Rome found all-absorbing—the coming war. Lina answered with scant words, and in a pre-occupied manner.

But in very truth the subject never left the girl's mind; ringing always in her ear seemed the sound of the gathering of armies. She continually heard a measured tramp, a dull, sullen roar, and then—a loud report of a cannon shell.

"Karl!" she cried, starting up in her delirium. Her mother, bending over her, heard the name, and answered soothingly. Sometimes Lina slept quietly; sometimes, smiling in a happy dream, she murmured the name of Antonio.

A letter came from Karl—a manly, affectionate letter, as free from sentimentalism as Karl's character itself was free. He spoke cheerfully of the war which had come upon Europe—spoke of his hope that his country and his

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country's allies might pass victoriously out of the combat. Commending himself to the protection of the Virgin, he looked forward to a happy meeting with those nearest and dearest to him. Or if another fate was to be his—if in store for him was the high honour of a death for his country—then he bade his friends take comfort—bade them he sure that his death would be a happy one. Above all, Lina must never doubt that his last thought, his last blessing would be for her.

Oh! the pain of those long, weary days, while Lina lay stretched on her bed, dreading to think, and yet unable to control her thoughts! Through her open window came the scent of roses, the hum of insects, the sound of the song of birds. Hot, drowsy, but beautiful days! Those summer beauties brought no smile to Lina's face.

The girl rose from her bed at last, and passed her time on a sofa in her room. Here, in accordance with Italian fashion, Antonio was allowed to visit her. He came every day to inquire after her health. Madame von Podewils was present during his calls, and Franz was often too; but Antonio addressed all his conversation to Lina, talking to her in a low voice, and bending his wonderful eyes upon her face while he spoke, or waited for an answer. This illness of Lina's had set Antonio thinking. And his thoughts troubled him. In the first place, he believed that he was to blame for the illness. He never forgot his discovery of Lina weeping under the olives. He had felt assured, then, that her tears were for him, and his supposed desertion of her. He thought that she was paying the price of her emotion in an attack of fever.

He made a resolve. Doing so, he esteemed himself mightily generous. He resolved to ask Lina's hand in marriage. He had very wrongly and thoughtlessly led

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her to believe that he was in love with her. He must pay the penalty of his folly and wrong-doing; he must ask her to be his wife. Virginie was lost to him for ever; he was free to devote his life, if it so pleased him, to the endeavour to make Lina's life happy. He thought sometimes of Karl. The events which were happening around him—the war, of which all Rome was talking, and in which Prussia must take part—forbade forgetfulness of Antonio's friend, the young Prussian soldier. How inexcusably reckless Antonio's conduct had been. It appeared to him that, act as he would now, he must do wrong either to Karl or to Lina. Well! Karl was stronger to bear wrong, stronger to bear disappointment, than Lina was.

The days passed on. Lina left her own room, and took possession of a small *salon*, looking out over the town. She lay on a sofa near a window. She gazed listlessly upon the hot, baked streets, the scorching sun; or, on duller days, upon the low-hanging clouds, upon the malaria-breathing mists. Antonio still came daily; sometimes he remained two hours at a time. Madame von Podewils, whose time was generally taken up with gossip about her neighbours, was blind to events passing in her own house. She troubled herself little to guess the cause of Antonio's frequent presence.

But Franz troubled himself much. Anger and sorrow struggled in the boy's heart. He poured out his grief and indignation in a letter to Karl.

Troops were gathering in Belgium. Lady Hilton, who had been passing the last month with her child and her child's governess at a German bath, hurried to Brussels, there to join her husband, who belonged to an English regiment which was ordered to the seat of war. England sent out dear and noble sons to fight—to die, if need be—

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on a distant battle-field. Then she waited, as all Europe waited, for the day when victory or defeat should crown or disappoint her hopes.

"Lina," said Madame von Podewils, entering the *salon* one bright June morning, "until this moment I had forgotten that to-morrow is Franz's birth-day. I have had many things to think of lately. But to-morrow *is* the boy's birth-day. Had you forgotten it too?"

"Yes." Lina lifted her sad eyes to her mother's face.

"Things happen unluckily, Lina. To-morrow I must go to Ostia. I shall not be home till late; one can only move about early in the morning, and late at night, during this heat. It's impossible, therefore, for me to invite any friends to celebrate Franz's birth-day with us to-morrow evening. Do you think that I can ask them to come in to-night, instead?"

"Mother!"—Lina's eyes, wide open, indignant, were fixed on Madame von Podewils—"are you thinking of entertaining friends at a time when——" The girl's voice broke.

That morning there had reached Rome a report of a battle raging near Brussels. The news was unofficial, and probably false. But there was a possibility of its truth! And to Lina's far-seeing eyes, a deserted battle-field seemed visible. Ghastly forms of dead and dying men lay in the morning sun; and a form which the girl knew well—a form with a fair young German face—was motionless among them.

"Entertaining friends! How absurd you are, Lina!" said Madame von Podewils, rather crossly. "Of course I shall give no party. I shall just ask my old friend, the Marchesa del Palmello, to come in to-night; and Antonio

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—and—and—my cousins, the Piales—and—well, and perhaps Father Eustachio."

"As you please." Lina turned away.

Evening drew in, and the marchesa duly arrived. Antonio came too; Madame von Podewils' cousins appeared; and last, but not least, turned up Father Francesco's successor, the fat, jovial priest, Father Eustachio.

Time passed rather slowly. No one seemed inclined to talk. Even Father Eustachio's loud laugh was seldom heard. In the presence of the Marchesa del Palmello the priest was never at his ease. He stood in awe of the great lady; he had a keen suspicion that she disliked him.

Franz received in silence the birth-day congratulations of his friends. Perfectly miserable was the boy's face. He watched Antonio and Lina.

Presently the whole party strayed out to the garden. They mounted the crumbling stone steps, and looked over Rome, lying magnificently serene in the moonlight. Lina seated herself on the bench beside which her mother had found her on the day when the news of Napoleon's escape electrified Rome. Antonio lingered near. When an onward movement was made by the other members of the party, Lina and Antonio still remained there. Lina was weary, and disinclined for exertion; Antonio was determined to pass the evening by her side.

He began to think that it was time that the proposal—the generous proposal, according to his thinking—which he had resolved to make should be over, and off his mind.

"Lina," he said softly, breaking silence quite suddenly, while his eyes dreamily wandered over moon-illumined Rome; "Lina dear"—he took her hand in his—"there is a subject very near my heart, a subject upon which I have

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been wishing for days to speak to you. At last we are alone. Will you hear me now?"

"Yes." The answer came in so sad a voice, so weary and indifferent a voice, that Antonio was positively startled. He found some difficulty in his task.

"Lina," he said again; then he paused; he put out his arm and drew the girl to him; his eyes rested on her pale face, paler than ever then in the white moonlight; "do you care for me—a little. Do you care—much—enough to give yourself to me, into my proud keeping—for ever? Tell me, do you love me, child?"

Dead silence. Lina never moved nor stirred. Antonio's arm was still round her; his gaze was not taken from her face.

"Tell me, Lina," he said, in a husky, impatient voice. "Speak to me, dear. Do you love me? Will you be my wife?"

No word of any love of his own; no passion in the low-breathed voice—the voice which had so vehemently besought Virginie to accept the devotion of a life. Ah! even then, while Antonio pleaded with Lina, a vision of his lost Virginie, with the soft, grey, guileless eyes, came before him, and he knew that the old love of his heart was unconquered still.

"Will you be my wife?"

Lina broke from him. She trembled from head to foot. Her heart beat with a passionate longing; she pressed her burning hands tightly together.

She answered in a strange, harsh voice, "No."

"You refuse me?" Antonio sprang forward.

"Yes," she replied, quietly, stonily.

"Why?" The question was roughly asked. Antonio had a minute ago told himself secretly that he should find

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no happiness in this girl's acceptance of his hand. But now that he met with only a rejection, instead of an acceptance, he began, man-like, to desire the unattainable. His pride was offended. What affectation was this pretended scorn of his offer! Lina had long been unable to hide her love for him. That love had grown into her heart, and she had lacked strength to tear it out.

"Why?"

"Because—oh, Antonio! my love! my love! surely you know why." There was such a world of condensed passion in the girl's low voice, that Antonio was silenced. "If you had bidden me but a few short weeks ago—had bidden me before this war had come upon us—to go with you to the world's end, I would joyfully, exultingly have made any sacrifice to obey you. I would have held the world well lost for your love. My darling!"—the girl laid her hand on the young man's arm; he was thrilled by the yearning in her eyes—"the proudest day that could dawn on earth for me would be the day that saw me made your wife. But now that this unhappy war has visited us—now that danger"—the girl's voice sank to an awed whisper—"has come to Karl, I cannot forget—I should be no true woman if I forgot—that I am Karl's betrothed."

A long hush. At last Antonio bent down.

"You love me, then, child?" he said, softly.

"Very dearly."

"More dearly than Karl?"

"God forgive me. A thousand times more dearly."

"And that love is hopeless?"

"How can it be otherwise?"

The young man was silent. Stooping, he touched Lina's forehead with his lips; then he left her and walked thoughtfully to the house.

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Lina remained for some time there alone. She shivered in the night breeze. She troubled little to think that the Roman climate made her retreat undesirable at this hour for a patient recovering from fever. She waited till self-control came to her. It was hers at last.

When she entered the *salon* the guests had all gone, Franz was there alone. A church clock struck midnight.

"Listen, twelve o'clock!" said Lina, in a strangely quiet voice, and in German—the language which she always spoke with her cousins. "This is thy birth-day. Franz. I wish thee all happiness, dear."

"Happiness!" The boy turned furiously. "Do not mock me, Lina."

"Mock thee?"

"Is happiness for Franz Kaiserling, while Karl——" The boy's working features betrayed emotion.

"Hast thou this evening thought of Karl filling a nameless grave? Or hast thou thought of him stretched on the battle-field, thy name the last upon his dying lips? Hast thou thought of him while the soft words of this false Antonio were sounding in thy ears?"

Lina advanced, with a low cry.

"Franz! Karl is not dead?"

"God knows. A presentiment which weighs upon my spirits seems to tell me so. But if Karl be living, think how thy inconstancy wrings his true heart—think, and take shame——"

"Of what dost thou speak, Franz? Karl's trust in me has always been generous and——"

"Karl's trust is dead. He knows thee now—knows the treachery of his beloved. Dost thou dream that I, who watch Karl's interest as I have never watched my own, who love him with a love that thou could'st never feel—

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dost thou dream, I say, that I have not forewarned him of thy faithlessness? If living still, Karl knows all."

"All! All what?" Did the pale face, so strangely calm; did the low voice, so strangely brave, awake no pity in Franz Kaiserling? None.

"Knows that thou bestowest such love as thy heart can give on Karl's worthless friend, Antonio. Have I followed thee through these dreary days, seen thee hanging on this man's word, marked thy eyes fall beneath his gaze—have I done all this, and not learned thy secret? Days ago I wrote of it to Karl. Ah! thou wast never worthy of Karl's affection. Never in thy life hast thou loved my brother."

"Never loved Karl!" Lina's voice was full of indignation. "Karl has always been to me a dear brother, and——"

"Brother!" Franz's voice shook with passion. "Was it a sister's love for which Karl asked, which thou professedst to give? Has a memory of sisterly love bestowed by thee had power to soothe his life's last hour passed on the battle-field? Already his country may have required his life. Ah! weep on. Would that thy tears had power to revoke the cruel past, to change the bitter present."

Franz left the room. Lina was alone. She moved to the window, threw it open wide, and looked out on the night.

The moon shone on the quiet town, wrapped in slumber —shone on an upturned, agonised face, on hands raised in entreaty, on a girlish form, bowed in a tempest of sorrow.

Thus the night found Lina von Podewils; thus the morning dawn.

"Live, Karl!" she cried, through rising tears. "Live, dear, dear Karl! Live to give me back my promise, oh! my generous Karl!"

. . . . . .

It is night on the field of Waterloo. The battle is over.

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Napoleon's last charge has been repulsed; his last hope has died out in darkness.

The din of the fight has ceased. The cries of the wounded, the moans of the dying, are heard now on every side. Despair is here, and unspeakable dread, and sickening longing for the presence of loved ones, never, till the great day of meeting, to be seen again. Low curses fall on the air now and again; piteous calls on beloved names struggle forth in voices all but extinguished by the night of death.

In calm serenity, the moon rises from behind a bank of troubled clouds. She looks down upon the field. It is the same moon which sees Antonio and Lina standing together in the Roman garden. A thousand eyes look to the source of gentle light; it seems an emblem of eternity's tranquillity. Rough voices, which lately uttered blasphemous curses, grow silent; faltering petitions rise to Heaven—

"Grant us Thy peace."

Thy peace! The warring world desires it not. To the weary with earth's conflict, its rest is glorious.

Brightly the moon's rays fall on a young, fearfully injured Prussian, who lies stretched across the breast of a wounded Frenchman. His young, fair face, shaded by a mass of yellow hair, is turned to the sky. His breath comes, gaspingly, in short, quick sobs; but his face is calm and brave.

"My friend!" he says, trying to turn his eyes to the French officer's, on whose breast his head is resting.

"Didst thou speak, my friend?"

"*My friend! My friend!*" Common misfortune draws closely together the bands of universal brotherhood.

"I am dying fast. And I have a message to a dear friend far away in Italy—a message which must be given into safe keeping, or I cannot die in peace. Thou art not

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mortally wounded. Wilt thou charge thyself with the delivery of my message, friend?"

"Most gladly."

"I send my loving greeting to Lina von Podewils, of the Via Sant 'Agnese, Rome. Thou wilt not forget her name, my friend?"

"Never."

"Let me hear thy kind voice repeat it after me."

"Lina von Podewils, of the Via Sant 'Agnese, Rome."

"Tell her"—the Prussian's breath comes in painful gasps—"that I loved her faithfully to the last; that I forgave her entirely, if I had anything to forgive; that—that——"

"Hush! I hear thee. Speak low, my friend."

"That Franz's tidings—Franz's tidings—she will understand those words, my friend—awakened not a particle of anger in my breast; that I bade her be happy with him who had inspired her love—love which I was ever unworthy to possess."

"My friend! my friend!"

"I bid her to be happy, to think of me without remorse, to hold my memory in her heart of hearts as a friend whom she esteemed, as a lover who adored her with all his soul and strength. I send her my grateful blessing for her sweet——"

A spasm of acute agony crosses the German's face. His voice falters; his head sinks back—a dull, heavy weight—on the Frenchman's chest.

But at last he looks up again.

"Promise to deliver my message, friend."

"I give my word—the word of a de Montbrison."

"God reward thee. Tell me thy name, my friend."

"Henri de Montbrison." The French officer, a young

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WATERLOO.

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man—young as the Prussian himself—whispers the name in the dull ear turned to him.

Then unconsciousness falls on the mortally wounded man; his eyes close; his breath grows very feeble.

The Frenchman raises his hand, tenderly touches the motionless face, and strives to recall the wandering memory.

"My friend!"

A bright look of returning intelligence crossed Karl Kaiserling's countenance.

"Canst thou—alas! I am all unworthy to give counsel on such a subject—canst thou perchance remember some words of prayer, my friend?"

"Ah yes! Thou wilt raise my hands?"

They are raised to heaven. The German's earnest eyes seek the tranquil sky.

"God bless the dear Fatherland, in whose cause I willingly give my life."

"Amen."

"God bless and give peace to France."

"Amen. Oh! amen, amen."

"God bless my darling Lina, and grant——"

The voice breaks; the hands fall heavily; the eyes grow dim in death.

With words of blessing on his lips, with thoughts of love and of forgiveness in his heart, the gallant Karl Kaiserling passes to the land of unending forgiveness, the land of blessing and of love.*

* The *latter part* of this chapter has appeared, in the form of a short story, in a magazine to which the author sent the tale two years ago. As the story did not appear for so long a time, she imagined it was not suited to the magazine. The tale suddenly appeared after this book was sent to press.

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CHAP. XI.—DYNTON.

"CONFOUND the priest!" murmured to himself the Reverend Josiah Garnet, pausing in the midst of the operation of shaving.

Time: August, in the year 1815. Place: the village of Dynton, in North Devonshire, England. An intensely hot day.

Fiercely the sun beat on the lovely little white village of Dynton, perched on the top of a thickly-wooded hill. Fiercely it beat on the sister village of Dynmouth below, by the sea.

A bold coast is this North Devonshire one—a coast where mighty waves fret and dash, and with loud lament break upon huge rocks.

In all wide England I know no more fascinating district than this of which I write. A sparkling river—the river Dyn—well known to trout-fishers, forces its way over huge fragments of moss-covered stones to the wide sea; beauties of wood and soft inland scenery are there for those who seek them; the majesty of rock and stormy sea is there too, to awe us with its grandeur.

I wish—how I wish!—for the pen of the Kingsleys, to describe Dynmouth worthily to those who do not know the place. The great love for the picturesque West of

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England, for dear old Devonshire in particular—love which breathes through "Westward Ho!" "Two Years Ago," "Ravenshoe," and other works—I do, I think, possess. The power which I lack, and which the Kingsleys have in vast measure, is the power of awakening your answering love, my reader.

The August sun shines on as lovely a wild, simple fishing village as you will find anywhere when it shines on Dynmouth.

Dynmouth has a picturesque beach of pebbles and sharp stones—has a limekiln—has a background of jagged cliffs and wooded hills—has a sight of moors which stretch far away on the tops of the hills—has a village street of pretty white-washed cottages, with fuchsia-covered porches. Away on the horizon the masts of brave ships stand out against the sky. Many a merchant ship, laden with goods at Bristol, passes along the channel on her way to distant shores. Many a homeward-bound vessel sails gallantly past Dynmouth.

A labyrinth of anchors, boats requiring carpentering, old spars, and wreck-recovered fragments of wood, are generally to be seen on the beach. And here, out of the herring season—and August is out of the herring season, as all the world knows—fishermen sit mending their nets. I think that their figures add to the picturesqueness of the scene; I am sure that their voices, harsh and gruff though they be, are pleasant and cheery to hear, as the men sing over their work. Their songs are of "jolly mariners," "sailor-lads," and "deep blue seas."

Hotels have of late years sprung up in Dynton and Dynmouth. The railway, fortunately, comes as yet no nearer than Larnstaple, a distance of nearly twenty miles; but steamers ply during the summer months from Bristol,

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and coaches run from Larnstaple and Binehead, bringing shoals of tourists, who help to import new fashions among the simple west-countrymen, and to rob the place of its wild and primitive character. Alas! for the old days of lumbering coaches and inconvenience—days which our fathers disparage!

In 1815—the year of which I write—tourists were a less numerous race. Dynmouth and Dynton were quiet villages enough. Terraces of lodging-houses were not in existence; only one hotel was to be found in the place. No driving road led from Dynmouth to Dynton. The ascent was made by means of pack horses.

"Confound the priest!" repeated the Reverend Josiah Garnet, looking out from his hotel window on sun-scorched, hazy Dynton.

The Reverend Josiah Garnet was Fellow and Professor of St. Luke's, Oxbridge. His age was forty, or thereabouts; he had a tall, spare, and somewhat awkward figure; a quantity of hair, already turning iron grey, and a pleasant, hearty face.

He had come to Dynton during this long vacation ostensibly to indulge in trout-fishing—in reality, on a very different errand. He began to think himself a fool for his pains.

The Reverend Josiah Garnet was now, at the age of forty, in love; and the course of his love ran as little smoothly as ever ran true love in old Shakesperian days. The summer before this he had been in Dynton. There, through the instrumentality of a friend, Sir Felix Hilton, he made the acquaintance of a certain Miss Alice Dashwood, Sir Felix's sister-in-law. We have seen the young lady—seen her in a little Alpine cemetery—seen her lifting a frank, young face to our friend, Father Francesco.

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With this lady Mr. Garnet, the year before, fell desperately in love.

He lacked courage then to tell the girl of his love. He went back to Oxbridge, his secret unspoken. Alice was so young, he said to himself; her seventeen years had passed so joyously and lightly over her head, that it was scarcely probable she would care much for him whom student life had aged even beyond his years. And yet—and yet—he could remember some walks, on lovely summer evenings, by the tumbling, splashing Dyn river, when, whispering to his darling some vague hint of the passion in his heart, he had seen her face flush happily—seen a soft, shy smile pass over her lips.

In the quiet university town to which he returned, he had abundant time to ponder over those memories. Walking in the shadow of grey college walls, sauntering by the sluggish Oxbridge river, or feigning attention to the drowsy remarks of sleepy old Fellows, crowded in the evenings in Combination Room, he thought almost incessantly of the Dynton days which he had passed with Alice.

Old Mr. Dashwood, Alice's father, was very rich. Instead of hailing, Mr. Garnet deplored that fact. The girl's expectations seemed to divide her further from him.

The Dashwoods' home was in Dodderley, a suburb of Manchester.

Mr. Dashwood was senior partner in the great Manchester cotton firm of Dashwood and Henderson.

Mr. Garnet made up his mind at last. He would confess his affection—would ask whether a return for that affection were possible.

Hearing that Alice had again left Dodderley, to pass with her father the months of August and September in

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Dynton, Mr. Garnet hastened to the place where he had first met her, there to renew his acquaintance.

But he found that times had changed. No more walks for him with Alice by the merrily splashing Dyn river, while old Mr. Dashwood sauntered slowly behind, at too great a distance to overhear low-toned conversation; no more soft blushes, no more shy smiles. Alice hardly took any notice of Mr. Garnet at all. She had other engagements.

After the war, Alice had gone with her father to town. There she met again Father Francesco.

The priest was toiling hard to propagate, in London, the doctrines of his Church. He toiled amid vast difficulties. Times were far from easy in England then for followers of his faith. The Catholic Emancipation Bill had not been passed, or even proposed. Worldly sacrifices—and sometimes great sacrifices, too—were necessary consequences of a profession of Romanist opinions.

But difficulties only increased the young priest's ardour. How hard he laboured, how anxiously he schemed for his dear Church, he himself perhaps only knew. In this stranger city—so vast, so unfamiliar, so hostile to his cause—he needed all his courage. He gave his time, his best energies, all the power of his intellect to his work.

He was senior priest of a little Romanist chapel in Hammersmith. His parish contained many poor people, chiefly Irish. Assiduously he visited and tended his flock; he gave instruction, secular as well as religious, to children of his congregation. He preached constantly, not only in his own chapel, but here, there, everywhere in different London Romanist churches.

By prayer and penance, not less than by incessant labour, he strove to cure the old pain which at times still

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raged in his heart. The human passion, lingering there, must be checked, he told himself, by hard discipline. Midnight constantly saw the priest prostrate in his church, before an altar dedicated to the Virgin; the sun's morning beams, stealing through the chancel window, and illumining a great crucifix above the high altar, found him still kneeling, pouring out his soul in prayer.

The wonderful eloquence of Father Francesco's sermons began to be talked of in London; members of noble Roman Catholic families made much of the young priest, and lent him, in any difficulty which confronted him, all the aid which wealth or high position placed within their reach. But he had scarcely been a month in England when war with France broke out. In the mighty sensation which that war naturally caused in London, the priest was almost forgotten.

Peace was quickly restored. Great rejoicings followed Waterloo.

A letter addressed about this time, by a monsignore of the Church in Rome, to Father Francesco, after treating of business matters connected with the priest's old church, spoke briefly of local news. Father Francesco was informed of Karl's death—was informed that, shortly after the war was over, Antonio del Palmello declared himself engaged to Lina von Podewils. The letter was the first which the priest had received from Rome since he left that city. He deemed it desirable to estrange himself as much as possible from his old acquaintances. He answered his letter very shortly. He would not allow himself time for any correspondence not of a purely business character. But he could not avoid pondering over the tidings given him. Karl dead!—Karl, young, gallant, full of promise! Antonio betrothed!—Antonio, forgetful of his old love, Virginie!

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The summer passed on. When August came, Father Francesco's health somewhat gave way. Bodily exercise, insufficient rest, strain of mind began to tell upon him. A doctor whom he consulted ordered him to leave London for a time—to indulge, for a month at least, in perfect cessation from work.

The Dashwoods were in town. Alice persuaded her father to invite Father Francesco to accompany them on their annual trip to Dynton. The old man was quite willing to entertain the priest, but he made the visit conditional. Father Francesco must, if he be a guest at Dynton, refrain from any attempt to propagate Romanist doctrines among members of the Dashwood family.

So it came that the novel sight of a cassock-attired Romanist priest was given to quiet Dynton in that August time of the year 1815. The Dashwoods had hired, for two months, a house standing among grounds which extended from the village of Dynmouth by the sea, to the village of Dynton on the hill. Very pretty were the grounds, with rare shrubs, with hydrangias, flowering luxuriously, as they always do flower in Devonshire—with sloping fern banks, with frequent terraces, with steep zig-zag walks. The house, too—an irregular building, built cottage fashion, and surrounded entirely by a glass verandah—was charming. It seemed exceedingly so to Alice Dashwood, whose home in Dodderley was new, vast, pretentious; it seemed exceedingly so to Father Francesco, whose lodging in the Via Margutta had been a marvel of discomfort, whose rooms in London were dreary. The priest rested for hours in a picturesque thatched porch, which commanded a view of Dynmouth, of the rocks and sea, and of the Welsh coast, gleaming white and clear across the channel; or he wandered up and down a long

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walk, shaded by sycamores. The "Sycamore Walk" was the only flat piece of land in these Dynton grounds. The priest was seldom alone. Alice Dashwood was his constant companion. It was a thought of that frequent companionship—a companionship which he would rejoice to transfer to himself—which was uppermost in Mr. Garnet's mind when he uttered that unclerical expression, "Confound the priest!"

Mr. Garnet's discomfort would probably increase did he know that he might probably soon meet another rival. He was aware that a certain Monsieur de Montbrison was expected before long in Dynton; but he was not aware that Sir Felix Hilton would bring that gentleman for a visit to the Dashwood family solely because he wished to introduce him to Alice.

Father Francesco was glad to have Alice often near him. Her simplicity of manner pleased him; her somewhat childish conversation diverted him, and drew his thoughts from himself. He gave her lessons in Italian; he strove to correct her accent in his own language—French. I am not sure that he did not attempt instruction in Latin, and that the familiar verb, "amo, amas, amat," etc.—verb which Franz Kaiserling laboured over in Rome, and which English schoolboys have learned with many tears—was not repeated by Alice to the priest. Sitting beside her in the porch, while she made a pretence of sketching, Father Francesco would tell, in soft, low voice, some of the sweet poetic legends of his Church, or give an account of the grander lives and grander deaths of some of the early martyrs of Christianity.

Alice heard—if not for the first time, at least with new interest—of the youthful martyr Saint Agnes, who, at the age of thirteen years, joyfully laid down her life for the

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faith. She heard of holy Saint Laurence, who suffered most cruel torments for the love of his Master. This saint, as Romanists teach and believe, appeared, attired in deacon's vestments, and accompanied by a priest and a sub-deacon, before an altar in his church, just outside Rome, one Wednesday morning, long after his martyrdom. A sacristan, praying in the church, was struck with terror as he saw the three, whose faces bore no earthly look, pass to the high altar: the priest proceeded to celebrate mass. At length the sacristan advanced, and, in trembling voice, asked the deacon the meaning of the vision. "The priest whom thou seest is the blessed Saint Peter," was the answer; "the sub-deacon is the first martyr, Saint Stephen; and I am Laurence, who, upon a Wednesday—the day of my dear Lord's betrayal—passed, through much pain, into His paradise. And Saint Laurence, in token of the truth of his words, loosened his robe, and gave his girdle to the sacristan. The then Pope, Alexander II., to whom the sacristan took the girdle, laid it, to prove its efficacy, on the bier of a dead man: the dead was restored to life. Churches, dedicated to Saint Laurence, are much frequented on Wednesdays by the faithful. Alice heard, too, of Saint Sebastian, who was condemned to be shot to death by arrows for his Christian faith. He endured protracted suffering, received many wounds, and was left for dead. He revived, however; was taken before Cæsar, and once more obtained sentence of death. In the midst of an undaunted speech in defence of Christianity, he was killed by a blow from a Roman soldier, and went in all gladness to receive the double crown of his double martyrdom.

That most touching legend, which tells of the apostle Peter's meeting with the Saviour in the Via Appia, the

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priest related too. It is said that, at a time when persecutions against the early Christians were raging in Rome, Saint Peter, always impulsive, was persuaded by his friends to leave the city. He fled accordingly. He had proceeded some way along the Via Appia, when he saw advancing towards him the Master whose ascension he had, years before, witnessed. Struck with astonishment, he paused in his flight. "*Domine, quo vadus?*"—"Lord, where goest thou?" said he. "I go to Rome," was the reply, "to be once again crucified—crucified in the place of my servant Peter." Filled with remorse, Peter turned and re-entered Rome. There he met his death. On the spot where the Saviour stood, the print of His foot is said to remain to this day. Over the mark a church called "Domine Quo Vadus" is built.

Of Saint Dorothea, who is said to have sent, at the time of her martyrdom, a basket containing three fresh roses and three pears to the young heathen Theophilus, who, when he saw her led to execution, mockingly asked her to present him with some of the flowers and fruit which grew in her Heavenly Bridegroom's garden—of numerous martyrs who, in the arena of the Coliseum, right joyfully sealed their faith with their blood, the priest told Alice, in low, reverential voice. He remembered his promise to the girl's father; he did not argue with her in defence of the Roman, as contrasted with the Anglican belief. Upon the memory of the early Christian martyrs, whose history the priest told—martyrs worshipped and canonised by the Roman Church—martyrs honoured by Christians of all denominations—upon the memory of those champions of a despised creed, Romanist and Protestant may both love to dwell. Ah, me! it might be well, perhaps, for us to think more often of that "noble

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army" of weak women, of tender children, of humble men, who, in a strength not their own—oh! never their own—met death in a hundred horrible shapes for "His sake, who laid down His deity in unutterable agonies for them." In this age of travelling, we find ourselves sometimes within the walls of the solemn old Roman Coliseum. Does the remembrance of the heroes who suffered there for the faith which we hold teach us to be truer, braver, more constant?

The priest told Alice of his desire one day to travel to Jerusalem—of his hope to be "very early at the sepulchre" one Easter morning before his death.

The Reverend Josiah Garnet, having finished the operation on which we saw him engaged when the chapter opened, presently ordered breakfast. A dish of inevitable trout—he had breakfasted on little else since he came to Dynton—was brought to him. Breakfast over, he betook himself, line in hand, down the steep hill to the Dyn, and he spent the best part of the day in fishing. He returned to dinner at five o'clock. Trout were again offered him; he ate them resignedly. Afterwards he went out again; he made his way to the Dashwoods' house.

The Dashwoods dined about midday, as was the almost universal custom in the year 1815. Tea—a substantial meal—had been spread for them in the porch. The good things had been all duly honoured. Mr. Garnet met Mr. Dashwood in the garden. The old gentleman was smoking. After a few minutes' conversation, the clergyman proceeded alone to the house.

"Good evening, Miss Dashwood."

Father Francesco was standing in the porch. Nearer him sat Alice. She was reclining in a red-cushioned chair; on her lap were sketching materials. What was

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there in this young girl's face to bewitch the staid college don? He himself could never have told you. It was not, as we have seen, a pretty face. No matter. For the Reverend Mr. Garnet, it was the one woman's face in the wide world.

"Good evening, Mr. Garnet." Alice rose; her paper and pencils dropped at her feet. "You met my father, I dare say, in the grounds."

"Yes. He and I agreed to go for a walk. I came on here to ask you to accompany us. Do come. It is a glorious evening for the beach. A cool wind is blowing from the sea. There are not many excursionists about; we shall have the place almost to ourselves. You'll come, won't you?"

"I don't know. No, I think not," said Alice, looking down. "I want to finish this sketch to-night, and—and—please sit down, Mr. Garnet. You know Father Francesco?"

The two gentlemen had already exchanged bows—the priest's a courteous one, Mr. Garnet's very stiff.

"What a pity you didn't come a minute earlier. Father Francesco has just been giving me"—the girl pushed back her hair from her hot face; she spoke in a hushed voice—"an account of the martyrdom of Saint Pancratius. We have in London a church to the martyr's honour—the church of St. Pancras, you know. He was young, quite a boy, and——"

"And he died in the Coliseum. Yes, I know," hastily interrupted the clergyman, whose reading had been extensive, and who was as well acquainted as the priest with the history of the early Church. "He was exposed to wild beasts in the Coliseum. The story goes that a wild bull rushed towards him, but that, when it reached the

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spot where the Christian stood, undaunted, expectant, it stopped short. The fierce animal refused to touch the youth. Then a sharp pang thrilled the heart of Pancratius. He began to fear that the high honour of martyrdom for his dear Master would not be his, after all. Standing erect in the arena, and stretching out his arms to form a cross, he prayed very earnestly that the martyr's glorious entry into his Lord's kingdom might not be denied him, all unworthy though he was. His petition ended, a panther rushed forth, fell upon and killed him. A touching story, though not well authenticated.* But, Miss Dashwood"—Mr. Garnet changed tone and subject—"you have not given me any good reason for declining to walk with your father and me. Your sketch! You needn't trouble to finish that"—Mr. Garnet bent laughingly down, and looked over the paper in Alice's lap—"it's out of drawing altogether."

Alice laughed too. "I dare say it is; and I'll give it up with pleasure. But there is another reason why I cannot go out to-night. My sister, Lady Hilton, her husband, and her brother-in-law, a Monsieur de Montbrison, are coming this evening. I must be at home to welcome them."

"Your father tells me that they will be here, at the earliest, at half-past eight. Six o'clock is striking. We have time for a walk before they arrive."

"Surely you had better go, mademoiselle," said the priest; "you have had no exercise to-day; and the evening, as monsieur says, is glorious." To tell the truth, Father Francesco wished to be left alone.

* Since writing the above, I find given, in Jameson's "Christian Art," quite a different account of the martyrdom of St. Pancras. For confirmation of Mr. Garnet's story, see Cardinal Wiseman's "Fabiola."

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Alice, half sulkily, tied on her hat. "You'll come too, father?"

"Thank you, no. I am going to the "Sycamore Walk."

Mr. Garnet and Alice turned down a fern-grown bank, which led in the direction of the beach. The priest mounted a flight of stone steps, and found himself in the "Sycamore Walk."

He paced up and down restlessly.

Lady Hilton was coming that night. He had only known the fact in the morning. Alice had forgotten to tell him before of the expected visit. With Lady Hilton would come her child and the child's governess. The governess must be Virginie.

To-night, then, the priest will see Virginie again. To-night! He looks over the sea with glistening eyes, which have a terrified joy, have a strange fear in their shadowy depths. Ought he at once to leave Dynton—to fly from this coming visitor as he fled from the memories which she left behind in Rome? He had not sought her. It was not of his own free will that he came to England. Men in whom his Church's authority was vested bade him set out for this northern land; and he had arranged the plan of his journey before he heard that Virginie was coming also to England. A strange, strange chance brings her to him; a strange, strange chance placed him face to face in Switzerland with this English girl in whose home he is to meet Virginie. Chance! Ah! how often had his earnest voice, echoing through vast aisles and arches of Roman churches, or filling meaner chapels in Switzerland or England, bade its hearers always substitute the solemn word "Providence" for the light word "Chance."

The priest's eyes rested on the quiet sea; he was thinking intently. He would leave Dynton on the next

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day, he told himself. He would see Virginie once more—only once more.

He began dreamily to recall the different times when he had seen her. He remembered her first, a slight, delicate girl, with fair hair and tender grey eyes; he seemed to see her leading by the hand an infirm French pastor, her father. He recalled her, lonely, orphaned—recalled her in the early days of her mourning; he fancied that he watched, even then, her patient face rise to his, while a look of utter sadness deepened in her eyes. He thought of her in later times—remembered her sitting in the marchesa's crowded drawing-room; he heard her sing a touching French song. Afterwards came days when he met her often.

How plainly he sees her standing by his side, her hands clasped, her head downcast. He pleads for his Church, for Antonio. He tells her, in hoarse, low voice, that Antonio's affection for her merits a return; he asks whether Antonio may not hope for the happiness of making her one day his wife. And all the time that the pleading for Antonio goes on, a stormy longing is in the pleader's own heart to throw his arms just once round his darling, to whisper just once in her ear that he loves her—he loves her, and then—to fly from her presence.

Father Francesco lingered long under the sycamores. Had rigid discipline, he asked himself—had long nights spent in watching, had hard penance, had much prayer somewhat calmed the passion in his heart? He hoped so. He longed for power to effect in himself some resemblance to a Jesuit of the grand old type, the Ignatius Loyola type—"a Jesuit whose motto is utter abnegation of self."

Presently the priest heard a commotion, a sound of

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wheels, then the noise of many voices speaking together. The visitors had arrived.

The sun disappeared altogether beneath the sea. "Only his bright memory lingered in the western sky." Sunset! Time for the "Ave Maria." No church bell rang out for "Ave Maria" here in Protestant Dynton. But the priest bared his head, made the sign of the cross, and in a solemn voice murmured the familiar words—

"*Ave Maria, gratiâ plena, ora pro nobis nunc, et in hora mortis nostræ.* Amen."

The priest lingered awhile. At length he rose, and walked to the house. His face was pale.

The porch was deserted. Father Francesco passed into a small, prettily furnished, octagonal drawing-room. It was empty. He looked into a billiard room. Mr. Dashwood was there; with him were two gentlemen—one tall, middle-aged, military-looking; the other young, bright-eyed, curly-haired.

"Oh! here you are, *monseer*," said Mr. Dashwood. The old gentleman refused to call the young priest "father." "Let me introduce you to my son-in-law, Sir Felix Hilton, and to Mr. de Montbrison."

Sir Felix and de Montbrison were step-brothers. Sir Felix's mother married, on the death of her first husband, a Frenchman—a Comte de Montbrison. This second husband died a year after his marriage, leaving an infant son. The son Henri was now lieutenant in the French army. The step-brothers were both soldiers—one in the French, the other in the English service. By a singular fatality, the brothers met at Waterloo—met as members of hostile armies.

Mr. Garnet came in. Sir Felix greeted him cordially. The Oxbridge don was a college friend of his. Sir Felix

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addressed Mr. Garnet as "Gay," a nickname by which that gentleman was generally known. His own name of Josiah had been long since voted, even by his family, too ugly for use; his surname had been abbreviated into Gay.

"The ladies are upstairs," said Mr. Dashwood's fussy voice; "we shall be quite ready for supper when they appear, eh?"

"Which of the two languages—French or English—do you speak the more easily?" asked de Montbrison of the priest.

"French is my native tongue." Father Francesco spoke in a low, confused voice, like the voice of a person half asleep. His eyes were on the door.

Alice entered now. Beside her was Lady Hilton. No one else!

The priest had been presented to Lady Hilton in Rome. He advanced to her now.

"May I recall myself to your ladyship's remembrance?"

There was a move to the supper-room. Mr. Garnet, to his satisfaction, found himself presently seated near Alice at the supper table. Lady Hilton took the priest under her protection. A tall, elegant woman was Lady Hilton, many years older than her sister Alice, whom she resembled in no particular. There was an affectation of grandeur in her manner; her eyes had a cold look; her voice was low and languid.

Lady Hilton esteemed this Dynton visit of hers a vast condescension. She had married young, while quite a girl. The firm of Dashwood & Henderson was flourishing vigorously even at that time. Anna Dashwood—Lady Hilton's name was Anna—was an heiress. Now she hated the name of Manchester, of cotton trade. Her husband's family was poor and proud. Lady Hilton,

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in her contempt for her father's business, forgot—perhaps she did not quite know—that to it, and to the wealth which it brought, she, in great measure, owed her marriage.

The priest sat almost silent by Lady Hilton's side, while she talked about Italy, about the Roman climate, the mildness of the *sirocco* wind, the extreme cold of the *tramontana*—talked, displaying knowledge gained chiefly from guide-books, of statues and pictures in the Capitol, the Vatican, and other galleries—talked of the war, of valour displayed by her husband's regiment—talked of Brussels, Paris, London, of passing events, of things in general. The priest answered mechanically. There was a self-absorbed look in his dark eyes. Would he see Virginie to-night, he wondered.

Supper over, everyone went to the octagon room. De Montbrison walked straight to the piano; he had great musical taste.

"Do you play, Miss Dashwood?" he asked, turning his blue eyes on Alice.

"A little."

"And sing?"

"Not at all."

Smash went a music Canterbury, breaking into many pieces. The Oxbridge professor, who had been leaning against the Canterbury, sprawled upon the ground.

Alice laughed merrily; de Montbrison joined in the chorus. Mr. Garnet picked himself up.

Lady Hilton considered herself too well bred to display amusement.

"Mademoiselle will sing for you. Shall I send for her?" she asked, addressing de Montbrison.

"If you will be so kind."

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The priest stood near an open window; he heard the words.

This mademoiselle must be Virginie.

Further into the shade he crept, hiding himself from observation. Over his worn, sensitive face the colour rushed. He waited—waited in silence—till Virginie should come.

"Send for Queenie too," called out de Montbrison. "Queenie" was a nickname of his own for Lady Hilton's little daughter. The child's name was Maude.

Soon the door opened. A child's quick footsteps approached.

Father Francesco did not look up.

Then the priest heard the rustling of a silk dress. He started. He could not associate this sound with Virginie's presence. In old days the girl had always worn soft-falling woollen dresses.

"Alice," said Lady Hilton, "you know mademoiselle."

"There is here, mademoiselle, only one stranger to you. Let me introduce Father Francesco." The speaker peered into the dark corner where the priest was standing.

Father Francesco came forward. He could not meet Virginie as a stranger. For her sake, as well as his own, he was calm. He stretched out his hand. Then he paused, mystified.

It was not Virginie's face, crowned with a mass of fair, smooth hair—it was not Virginie's slight figure on which his eyes fell. He saw a small Parisienne-looking lady, who saluted him with a curtsey.

With a great effort, the priest composed himself to bow.

. . . . . .

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"Where is Father Francesco?" asked Alice, later in the evening.

"He disappeared soon after mademoiselle came in," replied Mr. Garnet. "Perhaps he has gone down to the beach; apparently, he is very fond of the sea. Do you want him?" he continued, savagely.

"Well, yes. I wish he were here. Monsieur de Montbrison asked me to play some Italian mass music. Father Francesco gave me yesterday some hints about the difficult passages. I want him to tell me whether I have improved."

"Is he a musician?"

"No. But he understands music, especially Italian mass music."

Alice played in Father Francesco's absence, but played in a listless fashion. Her face was clouded.

Then the governess sang. Henri de Montbrison arranged her music, turned over her pages, joined sometimes in her songs—bright French songs for the most part, some of them with gay choruses of the "Tra la la" order.

Lady Hilton called Alice to her chair. She was always rather pleased to patronise her young sister.

"You have more amusing visitors than usual now," she said, condescendingly. "Mr. Garnet is a man highly thought of in certain circles—learned circles, you know, child. And this foreign priest is charming. Tell me, where did you pick him up?"

"We met him—father and I—in Switzerland."

"He is delightful. His appearance is distinguished—unlike most Swiss priests, who, as a rule, are unbearably vulgar. But you must take care, Alice. Don't let this man talk you into thinking favourably of his creed.

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Avoid the subject of religion. One cannot be too cautious with Jesuits—I dare say that this priest is a Jesuit. It was through a Jesuit that Lady Carlyon's perversion was brought about. Do you remember the uproar which that business caused? Ah! I forgot"—very pityingly—"you don't know Lady Carlyon. But your Dodderley friends—the Hendersons, for example—would be horrified at the idea of your entertaining a Roman Catholic priest. And Phœbe! what would Phœbe Weston say?"

Alice laughed. "I often think of Phœbe," she answered. "Yes, Phœbe will be aghast when she hears of the visit."

Phœbe Weston was Alice Dashwood's bugbear. She had spoken of Phœbe, you will remember, to Father Francesco in Switzerland. "Who on earth is Phœbe Weston?" the priest had wondered.

No hurry for making her acquaintance, reader. You will be introduced to her in good time.

As Mr. Garnet walked to his hotel, he thought of Alice; it was his custom to think of her whenever he was alone. Of the simple, girlish face which had taken possession of his fancy he never spoke; it was not his habit to make confidences. With pain he had observed that that face lighted up on the priest's approach—lighted as it once had lighted for *him* by the Dyn river; with pain he had seen that face darken this evening, and had known that Father Francesco's absence caused its shade.

"Confound the priest!" Mr. Garnet had reached his hotel. With the unclerical exclamation with which he had commenced the morning, he brought the day to a close.

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CHAP. XII.—DROWNED AT SEA.

"SO Mademoiselle Tonais has left you altogether?" It was Father Francesco who spoke. He was seated in the porch; near him was Lady Hilton. It was afternoon.

Some few days had passed since Lady Hilton's arrival. The priest had made the acquaintance of Virginie's successor, the French governess. Her name was Lucille D'Aulnais. She had an interesting face, dark sparkling eyes, and a rich, deep complexion.

Father Francesco had learned from her something of her history—a singular history it was.

All these days the priest had wished to question Lady Hilton about Virginie Tonais. Till now, however, he had found no opportunity of speaking to Lady Hilton alone.

This morning all the members of the Dashwood party, except Father Francesco and Lady Hilton, had gone on a day's excursion to Heddensmouth—a spot where wild grandeur has gained for it its name, Heddensmouth, or the Mouth of Hades.

"Where is Mademoiselle Tonais now?" asked the priest, for his first question was unanswered. "I knew the young lady in Rome some time ago, but have not heard of her since she left."

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"Left Rome!" Lady Hilton laughed. "Yes, she left, but not for ever. Perhaps she drank by moonlight of the Trevi fountain before she went."

"What do you mean?"

"Surely you know the Trevi fountain and its tradition?"

"Assuredly."

"Know the Trevi fountain!" The priest knew well, remembered well, every nook and corner in his dear Rome. It would have been strange, indeed, if he had forgotten the far-famed fountain of Trevi. He had but to close his eyes, and he saw it even then. The fountain is immense; its design is so absurd, that its sculptor—a disciple of the Bernini school—seems, as Hawthorne says, "to have gone absolutely mad in marble." The basin of the fountain is so large as to fill the whole breadth of the Piazzi di Trevi. Neptune, with struggling horses; Tritons, blowing horns, live here in marble. "Over a central precipice"—we again quote Hawthorne—"rushes the water in a semicircular cascade, and from a hundred crevices on all sides snowy jets gush up, and streams spout out of the mouths and nostrils of stone monsters. Finally, the water, tumbling, dashing, sparkling, with joyous haste, and never-ceasing murmur, pours itself into the great marble basin, and fills it with a quivering tide." Connected with this fountain of Trevi is a tradition, which says, that whatever traveller drink there, by moonlight, a parting draught of that enchanted water, will surely one day come back to Rome, no matter what obstacles seem to stand in the way of his return. Familiarly do I who write know the spot. I have taken there my parting draught. I have accompanied English friends who have drunk there on the eve of their departure from Rome. Some sceptical members of our band laughed at the

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whole drinking performance; their levity called forth the words—

"Whoso drinks the mystic stream,
With sage and due decorum,
Shall surely live to see again
Great Rome's eternal Forum."

"Whether Virginie Tonais drank of the fountain I don't know, but soon after the war she returned to Rome."

"What motive took her there?"

"She went to seek admission into the Roman Church. She had long been true to her creed; at length her resolution gave way. You know, no doubt, that the young Marchese del Palmello had asked her in marriage. You know, too, that his position required that his wife should be a Romanist—a Catholic, as you would say. Well, Virginie is now, I suppose, received into the Catholic Church."

"A Catholic!" No word from the priest expressed the surprise with which he heard Lady Hilton's words. A vision came before him of Virginie standing, as he last saw her stand, in the church of St. John's, Lateran; her hands are clasped, the priest hears again her low cry, "It would break my father's heart."

"Virginie's determination came too late," went on Lady Hilton. "We were in Brussels when she left us for Rome; my husband's half-brother and I remained in Belgium a short time after the war. Strangely enough, this brother of my husband left us for Rome a fortnight or so before Virginie set out for that very place. A strange errand took him there. A dying message was carried by him from a Prussian soldier—who lost his life at Waterloo—to a German girl in Rome. De Montbrison had been wounded, but his wound was a slight one; the

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journey to Italy did not injure him. Upon the nature of his message de Montbrison never spoke; he said only that it was to a certain Fräulein von Podewils. But he brought me news from Rome. In conversation he happened to mention that, while he was in Rome, this German girl was betrothed to a young noble, named Antonio del Palmello. Now, as Henri de Montbrison only returned to Brussels a few days after Virginie left, I am convinced that Virginie's determination was made too late. Her change of religion would be unavailing; she would find, on her arrival in Rome, that Antonio's love was stolen from her. I have received no tidings of her since she left. Were it not for what Henri told me, I should suppose her to be now Antonio's wife."

"If she have, indeed, entered our Church—the only true Church—then assuredly she *is* Antonio's wife."

The priest spoke emphatically.

"Antonio is betrothed, I said," replied Lady Hilton, mildly. "I perfectly remember Henri saying so."

"Betrothed! Let him be betrothed a thousand times, and let Virginie return to him with the simple words, 'I am of your faith, and I love you,' and his betrothal vows would be as nothing. Antonio loves Virginie with all the force of a passionate nature. A letter from Rome told me a short time ago of the young man's engagement to Lina Von Podewils. What mistake, what influence brought about that entanglement, I cannot say. But should Virginie once appear in Rome, the engagement would be at an end for ever."

Lady Hilton shrugged her shoulders. "You know best, I suppose. I am sorry not to congratulate you on the acquisition of another member to your Church. But our opinions differ."

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Congratulate! Was it then a matter of congratulation for the priest that Virginie's wifely love was given to another?

Was Father Francesco in truth glad? For a moment he hardly knew.

Virginie kneels now, as he kneels, to the Merciful Mother. Virginie's prayers, belief, hopes differ no longer from his own.

Did the memory of his arguments linger with her? Was his, after all, the honour of winning her to the faith? Her husband worships with her. The priest need think of her no longer in loneliness. The patient sadness has passed from her eyes. Sweet to her is the communion and fellowship which have crowned her love.

"Guard her, love her, Antonio!" So cried the priest's heart, though his lips were silent. "Cherish my dearest—the holy Mother help me, my very dearest—as I might have cherished her had it been permitted me to seek her affection for myself."

"Listen," said Lady Hilton; "here come the Heddensmouth excursionists."

Tea was soon brought into the porch. Appetites, sharpened by out-door exercise, did justice to the meal.

The ladies were full of conversation. The priest was disposed to silence. Mr. Garnet was in a communicative mood. Through the day he had been conning arguments against the errors of papacy. He delivered himself of them now, and asked Father Francesco's opinion on them. The priest was weary, and little inclined for argument, but he roused himself to answer. Mr. Garnet had used the words "Protestant faith."

"Protestant faith!" echoed the priest, contemptuously. "Tell me, if you can, what *is* Protestant faith? The

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diversity of your sects is wonderful. Since the time when your country separated from the Church, it has been the fashion to say that the Bible, without the Church, is a sufficient guide for Christians. You yourselves—you Protestants—have proved that doctrine false. Do you ask how? Because it is difficult to believe that any of you understand the Bible at all, seeing that scarcely two of you interpret it alike. One man expounds a certain text in one manner—he is a Protestant, and a member of the Anglican Church. Another man gives another meaning—he is a Protestant still, but calls himself a Unitarian. Another man is a Quaker, another a Baptist, and so on. And the bitterness fostered for each other by the differing sects is great. You play into our hands; you prove, without the Catholic Church troubling to do so, that the Bible, uninterpreted by a divinely-appointed and inspired Church, leads only to variance and contention."

The priest moved away. Mr. Garnet looked after him. "There are divisions in his Church too," he said; "but there is wisdom enough there to hide those divisions. In this country, unhappily, we make the most of our differences."

We make the most of our differences! Truth patent as it is sad! And while we Protestants waste our strength in contentions among ourselves, it would be difficult to say who laughs most loudly at us—the follower of the Roman creed, or the rejecter of all creeds.

The tea table was soon deserted. Alice disappeared into the drawing-room, taking with her her little niece and the governess, Lucille d'Aulnais. De Montbrison followed. Sir Felix Hilton and his wife remained in the porch. Mr. Garnet half rose to follow Alice, then he reseated himself. Here was an opportunity for speaking

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to the Hiltons alone. He had determined to take Lady Hilton into his—confidence to ask whether she believed that Alice could ever learn to love him. To break silence on a matter near his heart, was to Mr. Garnet more difficult than to most men. For long years he had lived alone; his thoughts, his wishes, had been his own exclusive property. He coughed nervously, wondering how to begin.

Sir Felix, who was smoking, took his cigar from his lips.

"I wish," he said, addressing his wife, "that we could get rid of this priest, Father Francesco. When is he going?"

"My father asked him this very morning to extend his visit. Why do you want him to leave, Felix? He seems a very gentlemanly, agreeable person. Did this evening's argument vex you? But that was not sought by the priest."

The lady glanced towards Mr. Garnet.

"No, no. The man's a gentleman, and a clever fellow. But he's a trifle too handsome—eh, Gay?—with those big melancholy eyes of his. Too much of the priest's society is undesirable for your sister Alice."

"Why?"

"Can't you see? The priest's dignified manner, his beautiful face, have charmed Alice. She fancies, I dare swear, that an attachment, which has in it little earthly element, but which shall preclude the possibility of her listening to any ordinary lover, may be indulged by her for the young priest. She haunts his footsteps everywhere."

As Mr. Garnet listened, his face changed.

Lady Hilton was astonished. Sir Felix was not usually an observant man. Why had he taken such note of Alice? The explanation came.

"This fancy of Alice's is unlucky just now, for I have

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in my head a matrimonial scheme for the young lady. The man whom I hope before long to greet as her husband is to-day guest in her father's house. Can you guess his name?"

Guess! Mr. Garnet's eyes dropped. His secret was surely suspected—the secret which he had long kept to himself, or breathed to no more sympathetic listeners than college walls and college books; the secret of his love for Alice was discovered—discovered and approved—at least by Sir Felix. Sir Felix's approval did not insure Alice's. Still, it was something to Mr. Garnet to learn that his love was deemed, by one mind at least, not utterly presumptuous.

"Must I tell you?" went on Sir Felix, for there was silence. "The man is my half-brother, Henri de Montbrison."

Lady Hilton started, but not as Mr. Garnet started.

"Henri is a first-rate fellow, in spite of his French blood. He has been running just a little wild lately; this morning he confessed to me that he is in money difficulties. But he would sow no more wild oats when he had once a wife and home. I have been thinking that Alice would be just the wife for him. She is rich—my brother is not; but Henri comes of a well-descended family, and your sister—excuse my plain speaking—does not. The match is an equal one—eh, Garnet?"

No reply.

To tell the truth, Henri's confession of that morning had revealed the loss of a considerable sum of money. He had applied to his brother for aid. Sir Felix's idea of a marriage between his brother and Mr. Dashwood's heiress was first suggested by his desire to free himself from further demands for money.

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"We must get rid of the priest. Alice will forget him when he has passed out of her life. Then Henri's chance will come."

"Has Henri expressed any wish on the matter?"

"Well, not in so many words. But——"

Lady Hilton interrupted. "Putting aside for the present any idea of Henri's marriage, we ought still, if what you say about Alice's fanciful attachment to Father Francesco be true, to contrive, without being impolite, to induce the priest to go from Dynton. How are we to manage this?"

"Let *me* suggest a plan." Mr. Garnet spoke in a low, changed voice, very soft and quiet. "I find that I must leave Dynton to-morrow—or the next day, at latest—and return to Oxbridge. The old town is very desolate in vacation time. I will ask Father Francesco to go with me, and be my guest till Term begins."

"Leave Dynton! You, Mr. Garnet! Is that not a sudden arrangement?"

"Very sudden." Mr. Garnet smiled quietly. "But I must go, nevertheless; and I will ask the priest to accompany me. I will look for him now."

"You are very good. But are you sure, quite sure, that you really must forsake us. We shall miss you much."

"Quite sure."

Quite sure; because the very air of Dynton seemed redolent to the Oxbridge professor of his love for Alice. Quite sure; because he had just heard that that love was a prize desired for another. "I could not recognise the priest as a rival," he thought; "but this Henri—young, gallant as I know him to be—is worthy perhaps even the love of my darling."

Mr. Garnet mounted the stairs to the priest's room.

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He walked slowly; his head was bent a little. "I might have known that I was too old—too old," he said, dreamily. He knocked at the priest's door. No answer. He knocked again. Still silence. He gently opened the door and looked in.

The light of a sweet-scented oil lamp shone in his eyes. Near the lamp hung, upon the room wall, a picture of the Maiden Mother. Gentle eyes, full of a calm joy, looked out from the picture. Upon a table beneath the Madonna was laid an offering of summer roses—rich crimson, deep yellow, creamy white. There, too, were goss and heather. Before the picture the priest was kneeling.

A song of praise to the Virgin for the entrance of another member into his Church had just been poured from his lips, but the words had come slowly, falteringly. And now, involuntarily, his voice changed to a low wail.

"Thou hast found, then, a love, an earthly love, Virginie, *my* Virginie!"

His head sank lower. Stormy emotion was in his heart. And above him, pure and cold, the glorified saint looked down upon his trouble.

"My Virginie!"

Mr. Garnet softly closed the door. Upon this struggle he had no right to look. A quick instinct of compassion for a grief of whose cause he was ignorant, but whose presence he recognised, forbade him to force himself upon Father Francesco. He had not caught the priest's words, but the pain in the voice was patent to him. "There is sorrow in the world besides my own," he thought.

He descended the stairs, and, avoiding the frequented porch, placed himself near a side door opening into the garden. It was a beautiful night. The influence of

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MR. GARNET SURPRISES FATHER FRANCESCO.

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nature in repose, of the shade-wrapped earth, the peaceful sky, had soothing power for the disappointed professor. And the cadence of the waves fell like a whisper of sympathy on his ear.

Presently Father Francesco approached him. His struggle was over—victory was won. Mr. Garnet was a thorough Englishman in his dislike to show of emotion; and grief which hid under an unmoved exterior was the grief which won his most respectful sympathy. So he looked approvingly on the priest's quiet face, and he addressed him in a more friendly tone than he had ever used to him before. The two men stood looking out from the open door. They talked on many commonplace subjects, before Mr. Garnet made his proposition that the priest should accompany him to Oxbridge. The two faces were in striking contrast, as they appeared together framed by the doorway—the Oxbridge professor's face thoughtful, time-worn, a little grim; the priest's young, earnest, beautiful.

"What a glorious night!" said Father Francesco. "How grand the sea is in this dim light! Do you know that, until I came to this England of yours, I had only once seen the sea. That once was at Civita Vecchia. After these few weeks' acquaintance with it at Dynton, I look upon the sea as the most majestic, the most solemnly beautiful object in creation — more majestic, more solemnly beautiful than even my own Swiss mountains."

"The Alps are very fine," answered Mr. Garnet, in a matter-of-fact voice. "The world is full of beauty."

"Indeed, yes." The priest's eyes glistened. "Ours is a beautiful and a happy world," he continued, in a hushed voice, speaking more to himself than to the Oxbridge professor—"a happy world," he continued, in a resolute

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tone, though his head drooped, and his eyes were on the ground—"happy chiefly because of the opportunities it gives of work—hard work—work in the grandest of all services, the service of the world's great Framer—happy because of the triumphs to be won in the conquest of self. The world has disappointments for us—what then? Disappointments are rough diamonds. They are given us that we may polish them by patience, by resignation, by trust. When made bright, the diamonds are taken from us. But we shall find them again, by-and-by. They will adorn our crowns of glory.* For beyond this world lies another, whose happiness is infinite."

Mr. Garnet made no verbal reply. But he drew nearer to Father Francesco, and laid his hand approvingly on the priest's arm.

Before night came on the priest made his way down to the beach. The sea had a strange fascination for him—a fascination which he could neither describe nor understand.

It was high tide, and an unusually high tide. Sailors had been busy moving planks and nets out of the way of the advancing water; they were standing idle on the beach now, and were watching the sea.

"A high tide this," said Father Francesco, good-humouredly, to the sailors.

Ned Groves answered. Ned Groves was a tall, sunburnt, middle-aged sailor. "Ay, master, 'mazing high to-night."

The priest was popular among the Dynmouth folk—popular, in spite of Dan Rickards, the Wesleyan parson,

* This idea, which seems to me full of beauty, is taken from a sermon delivered in a London church. I do not know whether the idea originated with the preacher, or was quoted by him.

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who, in sermons to his sailor congregation, had expressed horror at the appearance in Dynmouth of a "Papist" minister.

"Any news of the smack Anna, Groves?" asked Will Vellacott, the burly coastguard captain, pushing his way towards the band of sailors.

"None." The speaker's countenance fell.

"What is the smack Anna?" asked the priest. His knowledge of the English language was not sufficient for him to construe "smack."

"Hush!" answered a woman in the company, raising her hand to her lip. "Don't speak afore him"—pointing to Ned Groves. "His son was aboard. The smack started, with a cargo of coals, a good while back, from Bristol. She ought to have been in Dynmouth harbour these three weeks or more. She has never been heard on since she left Bristol."

Father Francesco understood now. He looked at Ned Groves with pitying eyes.

He thought of certain tablets hanging in Dynton church—tablets which he had seen one day when he had strayed into the church between the hours of "unorthodox" service.

"In memory of David Hooper, drowned in lat. 28 34 N., and long. 31.40 W., on the 13th of October, 1769."

"In memory of John Drummond, mariner, aged 29, drowned at sea in January, 1780."

Over the sea the priest gazed again solemnly. It seemed as if his eyes could not leave it.

"Why has the sea so weird a fascination for me?" he wondered.

"Drowned at sea! drowned at sea!" he murmured, as he pursued his way homeward.

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CHAP. XIII.—MERRY AS A MARRIAGE BELL.

THE August sun shone on the woods round Waterloo, burned brown the grass upon Karl's grave.

Relentlessly beat that August sun upon Rome. The atmosphere of the town was languid and oppressive. Out on the desolate Campagna malaria fever lay in wait for adventurous travellers. Most of the higher-class Roman families had left Rome for their country houses among the Apennines, or for summer retreats upon the coast. A large population of poorer persons remained, however, within the walls of the city. The great mass of tourists, the troop of foreign artists—chiefly English and German—the band of archæologists and sightseers who occupy the Eternal City now during winter and early spring, were comparatively unknown, even during the Roman season, in the year 1815. Travellers came, of course, drawn thither by the fame of the matchless city, but they came in fewer numbers. And, trust me, Rome, occupied chiefly by Romans, was a more interesting Rome than Rome converted, as it now is, into an Anglo-Saxon colony.

But at all times August was a month when foreign visitors were very rare in Rome. In this August of 1815, however, an American lady—middle-aged, sprightly, an amateur archæologist—arrived in Rome. Of small account

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to her were considerations of climate. She "guessed" that this time of year suited her convenience for travelling. So she came—came with a scanty wardrobe, with a large selection of camp-stools, with ponderous dictionaries—French, Latin, and Italian—with a number of miscellaneous articles, dear to the souls of tourists. The lady was an authoress; she intended to present to the world an account of the impression made on her mind by the city of the Cæsars. Two subjects especially interested her—archæology and the errors of the papacy: on both subjects Rome presented grand opportunities for investigation.

On the fifth of August the lady—Hester Kimberley by name—repaired in the early morning to the church of Santa Maria Maggiore. One of the most beautiful buildings in all Rome is this church.

On this particular day—as, in fact, on the fifth of August in every year—a great fête, the fête of the *Madonna della Neve*—the Madonna of the Snow—was held here. The fête commemorates a miraculous shower of snow which is said to have fallen in Rome on the fifth of August, A.D. 352, but to have fallen on no other place than just the spot of ground where the church now stands. The Virgin appeared in a vision, and appropriated the spot for the site of a religious edifice to be raised in her honour. Pope Liberius, in obedience to her instructions, founded the church of Santa Maria Maggiore. It was rebuilt about 435, and numerous additions have been made at subsequent periods.

In the magnificent "Borghese chapel" of this church, solemn high mass is always said on the "Snow Madonna's" fête day. During the service held in remembrance of the miraculous shower, streams of white rose leaves, "like

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a leafy mist between priests and worshippers," are cast to the ground from two holes in the ceiling of the chapel.

It had not long been light when the American lady entered the church. She wished to see the ceremony, of whose performance her guide-book duly informed her. But, as the service would not take place yet awhile, she employed her time in investigating the church. She paced down the nave, "lined with an avenue of white marble columns;" she inserted in her formidable-looking note-book copious observations on the mosaic freize above her head, on the glorious pavement beneath her feet. She inspected the tomb of Paul V.—Camillo Borghese—founder of the Borghese family. She lifted her hands with pious horror when an officious *custode*—supposing, on account of the marvellous French in which she asked him some question, that the lady must be a native of Britain—presented to view, for her special veneration, two small bags, said to contain the brains of the British saint, Thomas à Becket. This relic is carefully preserved in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, though it is considered of infinitely less importance than the principal relic which is kept here; for this chief relic is no less than the *Santa Culla*, the cradle in which the Saviour is said to have been carried into Egypt.

Miss Kimberley gazed curiously on the tomb of Sixtus V., who, as a boy, kept his father's pigs; as a man, became a Franciscan monk; rose to be bishop, afterwards cardinal; and, finally, was "the Pope who loved building most, and renewed Rome altogether."

Her inspection over, Miss Kimberley betook herself to the Borghese chapel. A bald-headed sacristan was busily engaged there. He struggled with a crimson carpet, to be spread for the service. The labour of laying it down

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over, he sprinkled the floor with box leaves—tokens, in the Roman Church, of a special fête. Then he produced from the sacristy a large number of candles to adorn the altar. With pitying disdain the American lady watched these preparations for a "popish" service.

"Your arrangements are for an unusually pompous ceremony, surely?" she asked in wonderful Italian.

The old man nodded his head in friendly fashion. He understood her. Romans have a truly marvellous faculty for comprehending their own language as spoken by foreigners.

"*Securo*," he said, emphatically. "To-day a grand marriage takes place here—a marriage service, with full choir and high mass, the mass said in honour of our blessed Lady of the Snow." The old man crossed himself. "The marriage is of a member of one of our Roman noble families."

"Indeed!" Miss Kimberley's eyes brightened. She was in luck's way. She would behold not only the "Snow Virgin's" mass, but also a fashionable Roman wedding.

"The Cardinal-Vicar himself is to officiate," continued the sacristan, in a tone of importance, as he descended the altar steps, and, with head on one side, pondered over the effect of his artistic arrangement of candles on the holy table.

Now the Cardinal-Vicar ranks only second to the Pope among Roman Church dignitaries. Miss Kimberley, without knowing all this ecclesiastic's importance, was yet sure his position was a very high one. She turned over a new page in her book, looked to the point of her pencil, and breathlessly awaited the ceremony.

"At what time does the service begin?"

"At half-past nine. Ah! see!"—an expression almost

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of alarm crossed the sacristan's face, as he saw some gaily-dressed persons enter the church—"the grandees are already arriving. Pietro, Pietro!" he called shrilly, as an acolyte passed; "help me with these candles. *Signora mia*," he continued, turning to the American lady, "pardon me; there will not be room for you in the chapel. Many guests are invited, and will take their places here. Let me move your seat just outside the chapel gates."

Miss Kimberley was soon perched on her camp-stool in the nave. By degrees a crowd assembled round her—a crowd which in time grew so dense that she trembled for her view of the expected ceremonial. There were *contadini* girls, in costumes gay with scarlet trimmings and gold embroidery; there were countrymen, in blue coats, knee breeches, and buckled shoes; there were priests, regaling themselves with their inevitable snuff; there were monks—brown, grey, white, black—monks whose general appearance suggested an idea that a promise of perpetual dirt was perhaps included in their religious vows; there were smooth-faced, tonsured, cassock-attired young students from the Propaganda College; there were sunburnt soldiers; there were beggars of both sexes, and all ages; there was, in short, the heterogeneous mass of human beings which makes the congregation of a Roman church. The chapel itself was brimful of Roman *élite*.

Presently a liveried official was seen. He cleared among the crowd room for a procession, which passed into the chapel. First marched two acolytes, bearing a huge gilt cross. Then walked, two and two, *beneficiari*, *canoni*, and *monsignori*—all clergy of Santa Maria Maggiore. Last appeared the Cardinal-Vicar himself, supported on each side by an ecclesiastic appointed to assist him in the mass.

Miss Kimberley strained her eyes to see the great sight.

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But taller persons than herself had pressed before her, and her anxious gaze revealed only the red skull-cap of the cardinal, and the shoulders of his assistants. A peasant, standing near, took pains to bid her make the sign supposed to be a charm against the evil eye; for one of the *monsignori* passing in the procession was well known—so the peasant asserted—as the possessor of an evil eye.

An exclamation was heard—"Here come the bride and bridegroom!" There was a stir among the crowd. Miss Kimberley valiantly mounted her camp-stool. Standing thus, she thought to peer over the heads of the bystanders. But her position was a perilous one. A sudden push from her nearest neighbour all but hurled her to the ground. The bride and bridegroom passed into the chapel, unseen by her, after all. She lost, at one and the same time, her temper and her command of her counterfeit Italian.

"Stranger," she said, addressing her neighbour in an awful voice—and she relapsed into English, or rather American—"*air* you aware that you shoved me considerable?"

The person to whom she spoke, and whom she had not till then given herself time to observe, turned to her an uncomprehending face. At the sight of that face, at the sight of the figure to which the face belonged, all anger passed from the lady's own face. The face, though young, quite boyish, was the very saddest face which she had ever seen. The figure was deformed—so cruelly deformed, that no woman in whose breast beat a true woman's heart could have looked upon it without yearning pity.

In all the world there did not beat a more compassionate heart than the heart of Hester Kimberley.

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She descended from her elevation. "Take my place—my—my—dear," she said, in so gentle a voice, that the Anglo-Italian in which she again spoke lost its absurdity. "You can see better here."

But the boy had disappeared. He had espied, a minute before, an unoccupied corner, commanding a full view of the chapel. "There goes Franz Kaiserling," said a voice from the crowd, as the deformed boy passed along.

The marriage service proper will not commence till mass has been celebrated. Incense ascends now, "carrying with it the devotion of such as have not themselves, perhaps, words for prayer." Grand music echoes along the vast church. From the roof of the chapel softly falls a continuous stream of white rose leaves. And as that stream descends, many a peasant kneeling near thinks reverently of the mighty Mother, who, as priests have taught, sent to Rome, as on this day—in the midst of this parching Italian summer—the shower of snow of which these pure white roses are emblematical.

A bell rings out solemnly. The Host is raised; the congregation kneel; and as the figures round her bend low down to worship, the American lady at last has an unimpeded view of the chapel. She sees the bride's figure—a girlish, white-robed figure, the face hidden in the raised hands. The office of bridesmaid is unknown in Rome; near the bridal pair kneel their relations and friends.

And now the wedding service itself begins. Miss Kimberley hears a single voice muttering Church Latin—hears low, deep responses of the choir. She catches a glimpse of a ring handed from a wrinkled hand—the cardinal's—to a young, outstretched one—the bridegroom's. Then soon there is a stir, which proclaims the

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service over. From the chapel pour its late occupants. Outside, in the body of the church, is a frantic rush to see the newly-married couple.

Peal grandly down the nave, O marriage music! Ring out, O bells! on the heavy Roman air. With sympathetic joy greet the marriage of two joyful hearts!

"The crowd was so great that I never saw the bride's face at all," grumbled Miss Kimberley, addressing her friend the sacristan, whom she found again when the clergy and bridal party had left the church. "But I had a good view of the bridegroom, whose great height made him conspicuous. He is remarkably handsome. Tell me, to what regiment does he belong? and what is his name?"

"He is member of the Pope's Guard of Nobles. All Rome knows him as the Marchese Antonio del Palmello."

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CHAP. XIV.—A ROYAL SUMMONS.

FATHER FRANCESCO returned with Mr. Garnet to Oxbridge, and remained there a fortnight upon a visit. The clergyman's invitation was delivered so awkwardly, and with so much evident embarrassment, that the priest guessed its cause.

He guessed that perhaps an idea had gained ground that his presence at Dynton was growing too dear to Alice. The supposition troubled him.

Since he had been at Oxbridge he had guessed more. He had guessed that Mr. Garnet himself loved Alice. He asked the professor, in all friendliness, whether this last guess were correct.

Mr. Garnet's head dropped.

"Hush!" he said. "I have had a dream, but the dream is over, and done with. A reference even to it pains me. As for Miss Dashwood, I may perhaps tell you that her relations anticipate for her a day when—a childish fancy at present in her mind being conquered—she will become the wife of Henri de Montbrison."

"Of Henri de Montbrison!" The priest stared. "De Montbrison, of all people! Bah!" he continued, laughing. "De Montbrison has—hold, how goes your English proverb?—has other fish to fry. I know, I know." The

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priest nodded his head and compressed his lips, as though he could say more if he would. Then he walked away.

He turned into a small library, stored with prosy, learned books. He reached down a philosophical treatise, carried it to a window looking out upon a quiet court, and tried to read. But his thoughts wandered.

"It will pass—this poor child's fancy for me," he murmured to himself, as he remembered Alice. "It will pass—oh! it will surely pass, if—as this Englishman evidently believes—it ever existed. And she shall learn to love—she shall marry this Garnet. He is a fine fellow—candid, modest, true—a turbulent Protestant; but a fine fellow, notwithstanding. And he loves Alice mightily."

The priest set himself this work to do, before all other works—to forward, as much as in him lay, Mr. Garnet's marriage with Alice. The girl would dismiss the priest from her mind when she was Mr. Garnet's wife; and dismissal from Alice's mind was what, in his compassion for her, the priest most desired.

"I am weary—weary—weary," he sighed sometimes. "Upon a tender heart I have brought, it may be, a sorrow heavy as that weighing on my own heart."

The first step in forwarding Mr. Garnet's marriage was to dispel the idea of any attachment between Henri and Alice. This step the priest thought an easy one.

After a fortnight's stay in the university town, just as the grey walls were growing familiar to the priest, he bade good-bye, with many professions of friendship, to the don, and went back to his work in London. He had not been in town many days, when he started, early one morning, on an expedition to a quarter of London far distant from the Hammersmith one in which he lived. Before starting,

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he looked out an address given him by Lady Hilton's governess, Lucille D'Aulnais—"31, Richmond Terrace, Caledonian Road."

Where was the place? The priest consulted a map of London, and set out on foot. He passed his own little chapel, a mean building, standing among brickfields; he reached, and left behind him, the fashionable end of town; he gained, in process of time, the isolated quarter round King's Cross.

Oh! dreary, dreary North London, in comparison with which Alexander Selkirk's island must have been lively indeed! If your dinginess oppresses such Londoners as are obliged sometimes to dive into your remoteness, what must you appear to foreigners? A lively Frenchman, or an Italian accustomed to vivid colour, must be, when set down before King's Cross, a spectacle, worth seeing, of profound amazement.

With some difficulty the priest found the Caledonian Road; afterwards, with the aid of a friendly costermonger, Richmond Terrace, leading out of the road. The priest had been accustomed to the proverbial filth of Rome; but the sombre tone, the dinginess, the squalor of this London slum surprised and depressed him.

Number 31 was a bacon shop, where custom, to judge from appearances, was infrequent.

The priest entered. "A poor place," he thought to himself. A young woman, with a black eye, sat on a heap of unsavoury sacks, which were thrown down on the floor in the middle of the shop. She was nursing a sick child.

Father Francesco courteously lifted his hat.

"Does Monsieur D'Aulnais live here?" he asked, a little doubtfully.

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"First floor." The woman flung the answer at the priest surlily enough; then she bent again over her child.

"I beg your pardon."

"First floor." The speaker pointed impatiently to a door at the back of the shop.

The priest advanced, and laid a gentle hand upon the baby. "A fine child! He will be well again soon, I hope. Do you think that Monsieur D'Aulnais is at home?"

"Think! I'm pretty sure," with a grim laugh. "Good reason. He's ill. There is illness in plenty hereabouts."

The priest mounted a dark, steep flight of stairs; he stumbled at every step. "A very poor place for D'Aulnais," he thought once more.

On the landing the priest knocked against a lady. Apologising, he looked up at her. He saw Lucille D'Aulnais.

"You here!"

"Lady Hilton is in town. She has given me a holiday to-day, that I might come to see my father; for last week he was taken ill. But he will be very glad to see you. How kind of you to call!"

The priest passed with the governess into a small, low room, looking out at the back of the house on a dismal, neglected garden, all gravel and dandelions. Though the weather was warm, a coke fire flickered in the room grate; cooking was going on. Upon a broken table lay, in marvellous disorder, a plate of herrings, a brush and comb, a bottle of ink, a bonnet, and an old French newspaper. Upon the wall hung a good French print of Louis the Great.

Half reclining on a bed was an old, white-haired French gentleman. His face was pale; beneath his confused, white hair, which fell low over his forehead, shone a pair

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of exceedingly bright eyes. With his hand—a thin and very white hand—he pushed his hair back.

That the man, in spite of his surroundings, was a gentleman, was written in his face. Near him sat an old French lady, his wife. She was poorly dressed; she bent over some knitting which lay, with a bundle of coarse worsted, in her lap.

"My father, my mother," said Lucille, advancing. "This is Father Francesco, the gentleman of whom I spoke to you."

The priest came forward with a low bow. His first words were naturally words of sympathy for D'Aulnais' illness. Then Lucille cleared away a mass of rubbish from a Windsor chair, and offered the priest a seat. He took it at once, and opened with D'Aulnais a conversation which lasted some time.

Refreshment was produced, in the shape of a bottle of Burgundy, from which the priest—who was delicately afraid of hurting, by refusal, his host's pride—drank, with many expressions of approval, and much secret reluctance.

At length he took leave, and descended with Lucille. He lingered with her in the shop.

"I want to speak to you," he said, hastily. He looked round. A shock-headed, sullen-looking man had joined the woman to whom the priest had spoken on first entering. The new-comer stood at the door; he was chewing a wisp of straw. Father Francesco assured himself that neither of the couple could understand French—the language which he always used with Lucille.

"You must make your marriage engagement public," he said, abruptly.

"Oh no, no, father; not yet"—with a rising colour in the cheek, and a startled look in the dark eyes.

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"When, then?"

"When my father's services to France are recognised by France."

Lucille D'Aulnais' father had always been an adherent of the Bourbon family. His own family lost possessions and power at the time of the Great Revolution, then more than twenty years ago. D'Aulnais' devotion to his king cost him years of confinement in the Conciergerie. Since his release he had devoted all his talents to plotting for the Bourbons. An exile in England, he had schemed for his party; a visitor by stealth to his own country, he had, by his partisanship, often endangered his life.

In 1814 he was in London, engaged in correspondence with political allies in France. In that year Napoleon was, as all the world knows, for a time overthrown; a Bourbon was restored to the throne of France. D'Aulnais lingered in England, awaiting some kingly recognition of ungrudged services. No such recognition came; in the mass of Bourbon supporters who sought rewards for allegiance, D'Aulnais, who himself pressed no claim, was forgotten.

Now Waterloo had permanently deprived Napoleon of power. The Bourbon reigned again. But still, among the king's advisers, no one pointed out as a fit recipient of royal gratitude the faithful D'Aulnais. No animosity or jealousy was felt for him; he was simply forgotten. And the old man, with whom pride was the ruling passion, had resolved never to thrust himself on the notice of the great. He waited, in his poor London home, for recognition to come.

He had fallen lately, since his great disappointment, into listless habits. He had neglected his calling in England; in old days he had supported himself here by

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giving lessons in his own language. Illness had come to him, and found him destitute.

"Listen," went on the priest, speaking to Lucille. "The day of your father's recall to France may not arrive yet awhile. Meanwhile, your silence regarding your engagement is doing wrong to—to—others. In two months' time—it is well to fix a date—in two months' time, at the latest, you must announce that engagement."

"To be scorned by the proud English family of my *fiancé!* No, father." The girl tossed back her head defiantly. "I must wait—however long the time be—till the honour which is my father's right is accorded to him in his own country. Till then, silence. Sooner than be looked down on by these insolent English, I will break off my engagement altogether."

"No, you will not."

"But I say yes, father."

"And I say no. For your love's sake, Lucille." Then the priest turned to go.

"I shall see you again soon, child," he added, kindly, as he moved off.

At Dynton, Father Francesco had established himself Lucille's confessor and adviser. She was a Roman Catholic; but a wandering life on the Continent had given her little opportunity of becoming personally known to any Romanist priest in England. Father Francesco's influence over Lucille was great. He intended to use that influence in Mr. Garnet's interest and Alice's. For Lucille was privately betrothed to the Henri de Montbrison whom Mr. Garnet falsely esteemed his rival. The betrothal took place in Belgium, before Henri and Alice met at Dynton.

Time went on. September was nearly over. D'Aul-

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nais' health grew daily worse. Every day he watched for the royal summons which should call him from poverty to distinction. It never arrived.

But another royal summons came to him. It came in the cool of a quiet autumn evening, as he lay on his sick-bed. It came on the breath of a whispering wind, which stole in through his open window.

Not to France—familiar France—but to a country unexplored, unknown, he was summoned. He raised his head—his heavy, weary head—from his pillow, and called to his wife.

"*Mon amie,*" he said, gently.

She came to him.

"A long road, love—and for thee, alas! often a dreary one—the road which we have travelled together. I have come to its end first."

"Dreary! With thee, Gustave! Oh, my love! my love! What words are these?" And the old grey head sank on the trembling hands.

An hour later, and Father Francesco arrived. A French doctor—fussy, voluble—was already there. Afterwards came Henri de Montbrison.

D'Aulnais did not recognise the priest, who stood near, pointing upward, crucifix in hand. "*Vive l'Empereur,* did you say?" he asked excitedly. "No, no; *vive le roi.*"

Through another hour the sick man lay silent. Then he moved his lips, and laid them for a moment on the crucifix held before him.

The glory of the setting sun streamed into the poor room, and lighted the dying face. A smile crept over that worn face. D'Aulnais obeyed his royal summons, and his spirit wandered forth to the unknown land.

An hour or so later, and Lucille was standing with

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Henri before the street door. The girl's face was tear-stained. Heavy sorrow was on her heart. But she collected her thoughts to say—

"Farewell! We will bid each other a long farewell, dear. My father is dead. Authorities in France—the France in whose cause he spent his life—authorities who forgot him living, are not likely to honour his memory dead. Like my father, his widow and child are too proud to thrust themselves upon the notice of the great. Distinction, which I desired for your sake, will probably never be ours. And thus I will dream no longer of a life spent with you. You are poor, though you bear a great name; and my poverty would increase your cares were I your wife. Your family and friends——"

The brave voice lost its courage. The white lips parted and trembled.

"Distinction never yours!" burst forth de Montbrison. "Was it for the sake of possible distinction that I sought your love? Was it not for your own sweet sake? I am poor, as you say. But wait for me, dear; wait till I have saved enough to offer you a home—a poor home, but a home which we will prize for each other's sake. I will be silent no longer on the subject of our love. That love is no shame, but a pride and a glory to me. To-morrow I will proclaim it to the world."

And Henri de Montbrison's eyes—the eyes on which, when evening was falling on Waterloo, Karl Kaiserling's dying gaze had rested trustfully—Henri de Montbrison's eyes flashed and lighted with a generous resolve.

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CHAP. XV.—OXBRIDGE.

ONE cloudy November morning, not two months after D'Aulnais' death, Lucille and Henri were married in Father Francesco's church in Hammersmith. A cold rain descended with pitiless persistence. Through the gloom which prevailed in the church the crucifix over the high altar shed a feeble light. The bride was dressed in deep mourning. She was not accompanied by a single friend. The bridegroom too was unattended.

An Irish charwoman, who had strayed into the church to mutter a few "Ave Marias" on her way to a neighbouring gin-shop, and who had deposited a brown jug under a tattered shawl upon the floor, saw the marriage, and attested her witness of it by an unsteady cross in the register book. She muttered some gratuitous and dispiriting prophecies concerning ill luck, which would attend a marriage with a bride dressed in black. The sacristan of the church signed his name as witness.

The organist, a blind old man, struck up some cheery wedding music, for which the priest mentally thanked him. Father Francesco laid his hand kindly on Lucille's head. He said a few words of congratulation and sympathy. Though tears gathered in her eyes, Lucille answered bravely and gratefully. The bridal pair set out for France,

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whither Henri's regimental duties called him. They were to live, for some months at least, in Marseilles.

Henri's marriage was a great vexation to his half-brother, Sir Felix. That gentleman was especially displeased by the failure of his own scheme for a marriage between Henri and Alice Dashwood.

From his own savings, Father Francesco had advanced a sum of money sufficient to start the young couple in life. But for his anxiety to furnish them with means, they would have postponed their wedding. The priest did not wish for speedy repayment, and he entirely refused ever to receive interest on his loan.

The day after Henri and Lucille left England, Mr. Garnet received the following letter from Father Francesco :—

"DEAR FRIEND,—Yesterday, I celebrated the sacrament of matrimony between Monsieur de Montbrison and Mademoiselle D'Aulnais. The fact of this marriage will show how false were your ideas respecting the possibility of an alliance between de Montbrison and Miss Alice Dashwood.

"About Alice, I want to speak unreservedly to you—to offer my advice. Forgive my presumption.

"You love Alice. Well! let her learn your love. Answering love will in time spring up in her heart. To your great worth she cannot long be blind.

"I know no tidings which could delight me more, on my return to England, than the tidings that Alice had consented to become your wife.

"I say 'on my return to England,' for I shortly intend to leave your country, and to spend the winter in the South of France. I have been ill; the English climate during winter months is considered dangerous for my

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health by doctors whom I have consulted. The assistant priest of my church will discharge the duties connected with my parish till I resume my work in early spring. When my illness first commenced, a great hope awoke in my heart that the time was near of my farewell to a world where I have been very weak to endure sorrow, no greater, perhaps, than that which visits most men. But I have grown to see the selfishness of that hope. A change has come over me. I desire now to live, to live long, and work for my Master. Very poor must be that work; but the joy of feeling that any feeble service rendered in humility and trust is rendered not only *for* the Master, but *to* the Master, is great. Often in my thoughts is the memory of the vision of St. Martin of Tours. That holy man was journeying through frost and snow one night in midwinter. He met a beggar, who, shivering with cold, demanded alms. The saint was wearing a scanty cloak. This cloak he divided into two pieces—gave one to the beggar, wrapped the other round himself, and pursued his way. Sleep came to him. In his sleep he dreamed. He dreamed that paradise lay before his eyes; he saw his Lord walking with a company of the blessed, and upon the Saviour's shoulders was half a cloak. 'Lord,' asked one, 'why wearest Thou this poor garment?' The answer thrilled to the heart of the listening saint—'Martin of Tours gave me this half cloak.'

"Marvellous words! Gave *me!*

"I bring my letter to a close. But, first, I must thank you—for I have never sufficiently done so—for your kind hospitality to me at Oxbridge. I trust that nothing may interrupt our friendship: surely my advice about Alice will not offend you. Still less need the difference in our religious views lessen our regard for each other. I ought

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to be the last man to deny the right hand of fellowship to members of your Church, for the dearest friend whom earth holds for me was long a persistent Protestant.—Believe me, very sincerely yours, "FRANCESCO."

Mr. Garnet, when he received this letter, was seated in a little study, looking on a stone court. Rain came drip, drip, drip, with dreary monotony, upon the pavement. Mr. Garnet crunched the letter in his hand. His face was moody as the November day itself. He walked to the window, and looked ruefully out upon the rain.

Mr. Garnet had heard already, from Sir Felix Hilton, who the day before had passed through Oxbridge, of de Montbrison's marriage.

"The fool might probably have had Alice for the asking," stormed Sir Felix. "At any rate, he might have tried his luck. It's true, though," he added, *sotto voce*, "that Alice shows little desire for a married life. She has just refused the son of a fabulously rich Manchester cotton lord—Henderson by name—her father's partner."

"There's a Henderson at our college, St. Luke's. He is a Lancashire fellow," said Mr. Garnet.

"That's the man."

The same night Mr. Garnet invited Henderson of St. Luke's to supper, and treated him with special kindness. Henderson was a tall, lank young man—pale-faced, somewhat conceited, a little uninteresting. He interested Mr. Garnet, for Alice's sake.

A disorderly room, this study of the professor's. Piles of books—thick in dust, for servants were forbidden to touch them—lay on the table; a volume or two had fallen on the floor. Papers and quill pens were everywhere. Upon a tempting-looking arm-chair, drawn near the fire, were thrown a heap of blotting-paper, a college

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cap, and a wet umbrella. The mantelpiece was adorned with Roman bronzes, with some printed forms of college examination questions, with a few invitation cards, and a long array of pipes. Over the fire hung a faded engraving, bearing a dedication to one Reverend William Dunstan Garnet, long since deceased. The engraving was of a quaint old country church—the church of St. Ann's, Sunbridge, Essex. Near this was suspended a miniature portrait of a young girl, with frank, bright eyes, which looked straight out of the picture. Lower on the wall was an unframed coloured print of another girl's face: this print hung here because Mr. Garnet fancied that he detected in it some likeness to Alice Dashwood.

Mr. Garnet was in a discontented mood. He looked crossly round from the rain in the court to the disorder in his room. He was weary of the loneliness of his life.

Once his rooms had been kept trim and neat for him by a loving hand. In those days cut flowers always made his writing-table gay. A myrtle tree stood in the window, and attracted the admiration of passers-by. Now, that myrtle adorned a little grave in St. Ann's Churchyard, Sunbridge, Essex.

A young sister had at one time made bright the home of the Oxbridge don. Now, she had gone—gone to her own last home—and he was all alone. One day, some years ago, he stood at sunrise by her bedside, and knew, by a strange shade upon her face, that she was passing from him for ever. "Good-bye, Gay!" she had said, as her little hand sought for his in the darkness which was falling on her. "Good-bye, dear old Gay!" Before he could answer her, she was gone.

A happy home—ay, perhaps a happier than he had ever known—might be his—if—if—Alice cared for him.

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In that case he would resign his Fellowship, accept a college living, and inhabit with his wife some quiet country parsonage.

But as matters now stood, he would not ask Alice to be his wife; he resented, as an unpardonable interference, Father Francesco's unasked advice. Mr. Garnet's opinion of his own merits was humble; he despaired of winning Alice's love.

"She has rejected Henderson," he muttered. "She would reject me. I sigh for the moon. I am too old, far too old, for love-dreams. Where's my *Josephus?* I'll write my magazine article."

From his book-shelves he took a volume, looked a little dismally at the dust on the covers, and sat down to write an article, which had for its subject some incident in the siege of Jerusalem.

He wrote with great ease of style, and in strong, vigorous language. He did not often refer to the historical narrative, as his pen flew along. He forgot the rain, forgot the discomforts of the morning, as he worked. Not till his essay was completed, and he signed at the end his name, "Josiah Garnet," in great sprawling characters, whose illegibility was destined to distract some unfortunate compositor, did he recollect his annoyances.

Then he took up the priest's letter.

"Leaving England! Glad to hear that news. Coming back in the spring! So much the worse. Why, hang the fellow! *he*, all along—not de Montbrison—was my rival. *His* face charmed my pretty Alice. No doubt he used all his arts to win her admiration; now that he has gained it, he finds his triumph an embarrassment, and wishes to transfer the admiration to myself."

Injustice! Untruth! The priest had used no arts,

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and desired no admiration. But Mr. Garnet's temper to-day influenced his judgment.

The rain went on, drip, drip, drip, with irritating persistence. The wind burst in gusts into the court.

Young Henderson, passing at that moment through the court, had his college cap blown off; he ran to recover it. Mr. Garnet saw him, and nodded laughingly.

"A man never looks a greater fool than when he is chasing his own hat," thought the professor. "But Henderson seems a bit of a fool always. He wouldn't do for Alice—an absurd notion. Henderson!" he called, "when you have caught your cap, look in here and taste my claret. I have just bought a lot of wine."

Henderson came in.

A young man, with no very poor opinion of himself, was Fred Henderson. His wealth had caused him to be much courted in Manchester, and in Dodderley—his Lancashire home. He thought it quite a strange thing that Alice Dashwood did not respond to his addresses.

Since he was quite a little boy, he had looked upon his fate as settled—Alice was to be his wife. Nurses had told him so, in the first instance. Old Mr. Dashwood and his partner, Mr. Henderson, had always been great friends. They had entered early in life into partnership. Their houses in Dodderley were near, the one to the other; their grounds joined. When Alice and young Henderson were children, they had played together as often in one house as the other. One day, in sport, Cissy Henderson, Fred's young sister, attired in an extensive white pinafore, to represent a surplice, had married Alice and Fred in the presence of a large number of dolls.

When young Henderson grew older, his matrimonial designs underwent no change. He once or twice accom-

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panied the Dashwoods on continental tours; he paid great attention to Alice. But when the days of mock surplices and witnessing dolls were once over, Alice cared little for young Henderson. He bored her. The time which she most enjoyed at Dodderley was the time when he was at college; she took care that he was never invited to Dynton.

A short while ago, Fred Henderson had, as Sir Felix said, made Alice a formal offer of his hand. She had refused him—refused, a little to her father's disappointment; he would have liked well enough to secure a rich husband for his daughter, though he would not bias the girl in her decision—refused, much to the astonishment of Dodderley. Dodderley opinion was led by a Miss Phœbe Weston; and Phœbe, lifting up her hands in amazement, declared that Alice was surely out of her mind.

Young Henderson remained an hour or so in Mr. Garnet's room. He tasted wine. He talked a little—only a little, for the subject just then was somewhat distasteful to him—of Miss Alice Dashwood, Mr. Garnet's and his mutual acquaintance.

At length he departed.

Mr. Garnet somehow felt relieved when young Henderson disappeared. The young man's powers of inflicting boredom on companions were palpable to the Oxbridge professor as to Alice.

Mr. Garnet stretched himself wearily. When evening arrived he looked into Combination Room, and was the dullest of all the dull old Fellows there.

"My good sir, how grey you are growing," said, innocently, by way of making an agreeable remark, one of the Fellows, who had not seen Mr. Garnet since vacation.

Mr. Garnet's answering laugh was, somehow, not a very pleasant one.

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CHAP. XVI.—THREE THOUSAND FRANCS.

CHRISTMAS. In England, a true English Christmas, with ice and snow, with closed houses, with roaring fires.

Christmas in Marseilles, where Father Francesco had taken up his winter quarters, was mild enough. Lucille and her husband were established there. Father Francesco lived with them. The priest's reason for selecting Marseilles for his temporary abode, when doctors ordered him to the South, was that, by boarding with the de Montbrisons, he might increase their small income. With him now was Franz Kaiserling. Marseilles being on the road to Rome, by the sea route to Civita Vecchia, the priest often met friends travelling to or from the Eternal City. One day he met Franz. Since Karl died at Waterloo, Franz's distress of mind had been so great, that his relations feared that his intellect was giving way under his grief. He was sent to Prussia for change of scene; and he returned disconsolate as he set out. The priest, touched by the boy's trouble, contrived to detain him at Marseilles. Franz's aunt, Madame von Podewils, being consulted by letter, agreed that the lad should visit the priest. She expressed a desire that Father Francesco would avoid, in conversation with Franz, any painful

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subject. The boy must not hear the name of Antonio del Palmello, whose conduct towards the dead Karl had roused Franz's indignation. No mention must be made of Lina, with whom he was also angry.

The priest obeyed instructions. The great shock of Karl's death had told not only on Franz's mental, but also on his bodily health. He was weaker than ever.

It was strange, and somewhat touching, to see how the usually grave priest would bestir himself to be cheery for Franz's sake. Morning, noon, and night he was with the boy, joking and laughing. "Virginie liked the lad," he thought. He was studying German irregular verbs; he repeated them sometimes to Franz with a great many intentional mispronunciations, introduced to tickle the lad's German ears. The verb "backen," "to bake," changed in the priest's hands into "bückte," instead of "buk," in the imperfect; and I cannot tell what contortions the irregular verb "beginnen" did not suffer.

On the beach Franz and Father Francesco often sat playing dominoes; the priest always contrived to lose the games. As they played, they watched the boats leaving for or coming from Civita Vecchia. Sometimes Father Francesco longed to make inquiries of Franz concerning Roman friends—to ask how Lina bore Virginie's sudden re-appearance in Rome—what Antonio and Virginie (that Antonio was married to Virginie the priest never doubted) were doing. But even had Madame von Podewils' advice not been given, one look at Franz's sorrowful face would have forbidden the priest to introduce any name likely to call up sad memories. Concerning Rome and Roman doing, Father Francesco remained in ignorance.

The sea had its old fascination for Father Francesco—a fascination which he had first felt at Dynton. The sound

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of the waves dashing on the shore seemed a message to him—a message which he vainly tried to translate into language. "We come, we come, hurrying across the wide Mediterranean; we come with messages, which we deliver as we break." So said the waves; but the messages themselves were not understood.

Sad tales of shipwreck, of death at sea, pressed themselves, often unbidden, on the priest's memory. They were tales which he had read, not personally known; for he had spent but little time at any sea-side place. These tales he took care never to relate to Franz. Merry fairy stories—stories which the glorious fairy master himself, Hans Andersen, of immortal memory, might not altogether have despised—were composed by the priest for Franz's benefit. The boy learned no lessons; the days of Latin verbs were over, and were not destined to return yet awhile. Instead of studying, he listened, not very attentively, I fear, to Father Francesco's fantastic tales of mermaids and sea-sprites. In the tales the sea's influence was always benign.

But often—how often! and with what strange vividness!—came to the priest's mind, when he was alone, a recollection of tablets seen in Dynton church. It was curious how well he remembered the unfamiliar English names upon those tablets—how well he remembered the dates.

"In memory of David Hooper, drowned in lat. 28.34 N., and long. 31.40 W., on the 13th of October, 1769."

"In memory of John Drummond, mariner, aged 29, drowned at sea in January, 1780."

"A happy fête, Signor Franz," said Lucille de Montbrison, when the boy appeared on Christmas morning in the breakfast room. She spoke broken Italian with the

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boy; her French mouth could never utter words in his own language—German.

"A happy fête, my friend," echoed the priest, throwing his arm lovingly round the lad. What charming weather—eh? I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll have breakfast at the *café* this morning, and watch the holiday folk. Come along. Will you join us, madame?"

Lucille duly answered in the affirmative. Lucille—a true Frenchwoman—was always ready for anything in the shape of amusement.

To the *café* the three went. That *café* afforded them much entertainment, chiefly on account of the foreigners who attended it. Stolid Germans came—Germans, who laboured heavily through French sentences to polite waiters; Englishmen congregated — Englishmen, who deigned to speak no language but their own; Americans were there—Americans, whose strange accent in English reminded Franz of the American lady, Miss Kimberley, whom he had seen in the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore, in Rome.

And many of madame's French acquaintances appeared —notably, a lady addressed always as "Madame la Générale," a grandee in Marseilles. She strayed in with her husband and a company of officers, the reason for her appearance being a hope to meet friends and to hear news.

Christmas congratulations went round.

Christmas in Dodderley, near Manchester. Here lived and reigned, like two kings of Brentford, Mr. Dashwood and Mr. Henderson, cotton lords. Young Henderson of St. Luke's was the latter gentleman's son and heir. Our friend Mr. Garnet having lately taken great notice in Oxbridge of young Henderson, was, in gratitude, invited to Dodderley for the Christmas vacation.

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To Dodderley he went.

He much anticipated a meeting with Alice. He had never seen her in her own home; it had been at Dynton that he had hitherto met her. He had quite determined what should be his manner when he spoke with her—quiet, kind, fatherly, suited to her years and his own.

A large and very pretentious house was Mr. Henderson's—a house with superb reception rooms, with large picture galleries, with luxurious sitting-rooms and bedrooms.

Alice Dashwood came here almost daily. Her visits were to Cissy Henderson, a daughter of the house.

Boys in great number flocked at the Hendersons. Mr. Garnet found difficulty in remembering all their names. There were Jack, and Frank, and Nosey—one lad Mr. Garnet knew only by this nickname, bestowed on account of a lengthy nasal organ—and Bob, and Davey.

Mr. Garnet was generally liked. The boys voted him "not a bad sort of old fellow." "But you should see him play billiards!" laughed Nosey, confidentially, to Alice Dashwood. "He is as stiff as a poker."

Mr. Garnet was known in Oxbridge as a powerful preacher. His fame had spread far beyond Oxbridge. The rector of Dodderley asked the don to preach in Dodderley Church. Mr. Garnet consented. He resolved to deliver an entirely new sermon; nightly, for a week, he sat up late writing this discourse.

I think—I am sure—that the influence which most strongly prompted the clergyman as he wrote, was a thought that Alice would hear the sermon. He sought not so much the benefit of a whole congregation as the applause of one member of the congregation. The Dashwoods attended Dodderley Church.

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Father Francesco was a fine preacher. Mr. Garnet was a fine preacher. The styles of the two men were widely different. To Father Francesco words came in torrents. Long, intricate sentences, which, all unprepared as they were, seemed to owe their invariable grammatical correctness to a miracle; abundant grand imagery, melodious language, an impassioned manner, charmed his hearers. His sermons were always extempore. Mr. Garnet's style was plain. Read over his sermons—he invariably preached written ones—and you will not find one single superfluous word—one word which you could omit without destroying his sense. He expressed deep thoughts in simple, nervous Saxon-English. His sentences were terse; his style bare to ruggedness. But every word told.

Writing his sermon for Dodderley Church, he chose, as the season was Christmas-tide, a subject connected with Christmas.

"Alice has heard the priest hold forth in Switzerland," he thought. "I'll beat him as a preacher, if I can."

He dragged, neck and heels, into his sermon, in his anxiety, figuratively, to crush Father Francesco, some terrible denunciations against impostures practised in the Roman Catholic Church. These denunciations were parenthetical, and could have been dispensed with altogether. Mr. Garnet smiled grimly as he wrote them.

On the Saturday night before the day for the sermon, an evening gathering took place at the Hendersons. Alice came. She arrived early, an hour before the other guests appeared. Mr. Garnet, entering a yet unlighted drawing-room, saw her sitting in the firelight. She had stationed herself upon the hearth-rug; the light of the flames flickered on her face; round her head was a wreath of ivy.

Greeting the girl in the fatherly manner which he had

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prescribed for himself, Mr. Garnet advanced to the fire. He leaned against the mantelpiece, and watched Alice, almost in silence, dreamily, as one looks at a picture which pleases one's taste. Often afterwards, when, in her absence, his fancy called up her face, he saw her thus with ivy-wreathed head, on which firelight played.

Guests poured in in time. Most of them were Manchester folk, with whom Mr. Garnet had little in common. He passed a wearisome evening. The elder men talked "cotton" among themselves; the younger men talked local news with the ladies. Mr. Garnet was introduced to one or two ladies; I fancy that they thought him priggish and dull. Certainly he did not that evening shine in conversation. He tried hard to talk to Alice; but Fred Henderson monopolised her. "I am happier at home, among my dusty books and papers, than displaying my awkwardness at evening parties," thought the don. He was glad when the evening came to a close—savagely glad when he heard the last carriage roll away.

After Mr. Garnet went up to his bedroom, he looked over his sermon; some impulse, worthy his better nature, seized him as he read. He took a pen and hastily scored out every word of bitterness which he had written against the Roman Church. "Shame!" he said. "I must not desecrate the pulpit. Jealousy of a man, rather than indignation against a church, prompted, as I well know, all that I wrote. And Popery had nothing to do with my subject. The sermon is better as it is."

Infinitely better. Simple, direct to the purpose, it was the next day approvingly heard in Dodderley Church. It was delivered gravely, without the least strain after effect. Mr. Garnet's fame as a preacher was declared to be a just one. And Alice's eyes commended his efforts.

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Sometimes, while Father Francesco preaches, I am in some small degree reminded, as I watch the thrilled gaze of the listeners, of the marvellous monk-preacher who, in past times, swept across Europe, proclaiming a crusade to Palestine, and whose fervour wrought so mightily upon his auditors, that, as one man, those auditors sprang to their feet, and with one voice, crying, "*Deus vult! Deus vult!*"—"God wills it! God wills it!" entered on the crusade. While Mr. Garnet preaches, in quiet voice, and with unmoved face, I seem to see and hear some stern old Puritan, whose rough eloquence moved, in days gone by, the hearts of his hearers.

"Thank you very much, sir, for an excellent sermon," said, to Mr. Garnet, in the vestry, the Reverend Theobald Weston, pompous old rector of Dodderley.

"A very good, practical sermon yours," said, in a judicial voice, Phœbe Weston, the rector's daughter, as, with her mother, she joined Mr. Garnet, walking from church with the Hendersons.

At last, reader, you are introduced to Phœbe Weston. She was a learned lady, of some thirty years of age. She wore her hair in a short, thick crop; spectacles bestrode her nose. She was a great scholar, and knew something of Greek. In the parish she was a disturbing power. Mr., Mrs., and Miss Weston were nicknamed by parishioners the *rector*, *director*, and *misdirector* of Dodderley.

I do not, upon the whole, wonder that Phœbe was Alice Dashwood's bugbear. She interfered in everyone's business—put her finger, and insisted on keeping her finger, in everyone's pie. All Dodderley wished her married, and out of the place. At one time Mr. Dashwood was named as her future bridegroom; now that Mr. Garnet had appeared in the place, there were gossips

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sanguine enough to hope that a Fellow of St. Luke's would soon resign his Fellowship, and that, simultaneously with that event, Miss Weston would leave her father's home.

"May I walk home with you, child?" Mr. Garnet asked one day, as Alice was leaving the Hendersons, after a call of some hours' length. "I want to see your father."

"Certainly."

So Mr. Garnet walked with Alice along the snow-covered roads. The chill wind nipped the girl's nose; her face was blue with cold; she was not pretty in the least.

"A severe winter this," remarked the professor, for want of something to say.

"Yes," answered the girl, snappishly. "I wish I were out of it—out of England, I mean. I hate cold. My sister, Lady Hilton, is in the south of France. I envy her."

"The south of France! Then, I suppose, she will visit the de Montbrisons. They are living at Marseilles, I hear."

"For a day or two she will, I think. Sir Felix was very angry with Henri for marrying my sister's governess, Mademoiselle D'Aulnais; but my sister would be glad to restore peace between the brothers. By-the-bye, do you know that Father Francesco is living for the winter with the de Montbrisons?"

Alice coloured a little as she mentioned the priest's name.

"I have been told so—yes."

Then there was silence, long continued.

"You must think me a great bore, child," said Mr. Garnet, looking up at length, and fixing his great grey

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eyes on Alice—he always called her "child" since the adoption of his new code of manners. "My powers of conversation are not contemptible when I discuss some question of Greek with college fogies, but I am a poor companion for a young thing like you."

"No matter—oh no! not at all, I mean."

'Let me see; how old are you?" asked Mr. Garnet, suddenly.

"Nearly nineteen."

"And I am four-and-forty. Four-and-forty. Does not that seem to you an immense age?"

"Not so very." Alice laughed.

"Eighteen and four-and-forty. Twenty-six years' difference! Twenty-six years!"

"Yes," in a tone of indifference.

A few days after this, Alice received a letter from Lady Hilton. Its contents appeared unsatisfactory. All the day Alice's face was thoughtful. One evening, a little later, the Dashwoods gave a reception. Mr. Garnet attended it. Alice was hostess. She lived alone with her father since her sister Lady Hilton's marriage. Her mother had been some years dead.

That night Alice played much upon the piano. It somehow vexed Mr. Garnet that she chose Italian mass music—the music whose execution Father Francesco had superintended in Dynton days. Mr. Garnet tried to turn over the music pages, but he turned in the wrong places. "I beg your pardon, child," he said. "I am growing old and blind."

The same "cotton" conversation which Mr. Garnet had so little understood at the Hendersons buzzed round him this evening at the Dashwoods. Ladies thought the professor dull, as before—ladies, that is to say, with the

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exception of Miss Weston. That young lady beset him much. Delinquencies of curates were reported by her to Mr. Garnet; supineness of churchwardens deplored. Mr. Garnet fidgeted; he cared nothing for Dodderley curates, churchwardens, or parochial matters. What should he care?

"Do you sing, Miss Weston?" he asked at last, in desperation, anxious to conduct the lady to the piano, and to leave her there.

But Phœbe only sang in church. "I lead the choir," she said. "By-the-bye, Mr. Garnet, do tell me whose chants you prefer, and whose selections of hymns."

Mr. Garnet was not ready with an answer. He wished Miss Weston in the Red Sea.

Presently, to his relief, Mr. Dashwood appeared. Phœbe turned to the old gentleman, and fastened herself upon him. Mr. Garnet fled. When at last he advanced to Alice to say good night, he paused a minute. He took the girl's hand in his. He was compensated at length for the dreariness of his evening.

Mr. Garnet's eyes, quick to read Alice's countenance, had marked all the evening a troubled look in her face.

"Something has annoyed you to-day, I am sure," he said. "I wish that you could tell me what it is."

"Nonsense."

"Do you think that you can tell me? Do you think that I can give you help in anything? I will, if I can. I am such an old fellow, you know, Alice—twenty-six long years older than yourself—that you might confide in me almost like a father—mightn't you? That is, if you like me. I like you very much, child."

"And I like you."

"That's right. And now about this something which

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annoys you. I am convinced that you *are* annoyed. Think a minute. You are perhaps in a dilemma. Can I possibly help you out of it?"

Alice's eyes rose slowly. A new idea crossed her mind. "Well! I think you probably can," she said, a little doubtfully.

"Tell me how, child," in an eager voice.

"Not now. Some other time. Good night, Mr. Garnet."

"Good night, Alice."

The next morning, after breakfast, Mr. Garnet, for want of something better to do, betook himself to the Hendersons' billiard-room for a little private practice. He stood, cue in hand, beside a blazing fire. Suddenly, Alice Dashwood entered. Mr. Garnet laid down his cue, and advanced to shake hands.

"Good morning," he said. "You are looking for Mrs. or Miss Henderson. They are out. I saw them leave the house ten minutes ago."

"So much the better. I came here to see you."

"Me!"

"Yes." Alice coloured a little—just a little. She approached the fire, and stood beside the professor. His eyes were bent on her.

Alice was almost pretty that morning. The warm atmosphere of the room brought a colour to her cheeks. Demurely she looked down on a little foot which she held to the blaze.

"Well!" A broad smile was on the professor's lips.

Alice's eyes were shyly raised.

"Will you sit down?" suggested Mr. Garnet.

"No, I'll stand. You fancied last night," began Alice, dashing at once into her business, "that I was annoyed about something. You were right; I *was* annoyed. My

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father had refused a request of mine. He does not often thwart me—an old dear—I have my own way generally. Until just now I had not been angry with father for years—not since a dreadful time, when I took into my head the notion that he wanted to marry Phœbe Weston."

"Phœbe Weston!"

"The rector's daughter, who talked to you last night. What had she to say, by the way? I hate her." Alice savagely banged down the fire-shovel into the grate. But," she added, hastily—for Mr. Garnet looked brimful of curiosity—"it was a mistake of mine about father, I suppose, since Miss Weston remains Miss Weston still."

"Well!" The professor smiled. Alice's frankness was to him as amusing as it was surprising to Father Francesco in the Swiss cemetery.

"Well! Last night you kindly offered to assist me out of my vexation. I wonder"—with a little nervous laugh—"whether you meant what you said."

"Yes, I did."

"Because—because—I think I am going to take you at your word."

"I am very glad."

"Really?"

"Really."

"Father will not help. My sister will not. Perhaps you cannot."

"Try me."

"I am afraid that—— Mr. Garnet"—with a change of voice—"you are not rich—are you?"

"Not at all."

"What a pity!" in a dejected tone.

"Why, child?" Mr. Garnet lifted his eyebrows in surprise.

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"Because—well, because the assistance which I seek is a loan of money. Now the murder's out."

"Money!" The surprised look deepened on Mr. Garnet's face.

"Yes. I want a great deal, as much as three thousand francs—that is about one hundred and fifty pounds, isn't it? Now listen. My father gives me yearly an allowance of eighty pounds for dress. I might manage to dress fairly well, I'm sure, on a much smaller sum." The sage expression called up on the childish face was a sight to see. "I have a maid who is a fortune in herself; her talent for economy and contriving is wonderful. She lived, I believe, in service once with a curate's wife, who was poor as a church mouse, and who taught servants to be mighty careful. Well! I believe that I might save forty pounds every year. If I borrowed one hundred and fifty pounds, I could repay all in less than four years, at the rate of forty pounds a year—couldn't I? Can you"—turning point blank on the professor—"lend me one hundred and fifty pounds for four years? It seems a long time, I know." Alice looked ruefully down at the fire.

"You want this sum to send abroad?"

"How do you know that?" quickly, in a startled voice.

"Simply because you first named the sum in francs."

"Well, perhaps you are right. Can you lend me the money?"

"Yes." The grey head bent kindly over the young one.

Alice looked up, radiant. "Ah, how good you are!" she said, in a voice from which all restraint had passed. She laid her hand on Mr. Garnet's shoulder, and, standing before him, stared up, childishly impetuous, into his face.

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"Father asked me a thousand questions about my use for the money, and when I declined to answer, he refused the loan."

"One moment. The money is not for a purpose which your father would really disapprove?"

"No."

"You are sure?"

"Quite sure."

"I will fetch my cheque-book."

"Not yet—not till I have made a fuss of you. Do you know"—the girl reared herself on tiptoe, to gaze the better into the professor's face—"that you are a charming old thing, and that I like you tremendously?"

Just language which Alice used to her father when the old gentleman humoured her fancies. Instinct taught Mr. Garnet that fact.

"A charming old thing, am I, child?" he said, laughingly, as he moved off. He mounted the stairs to his bedroom.

Soon he returned, and presented Alice with a cheque, on which the signature, "Josiah Garnet," was still wet.

"How good you are! Now you want an acknowledgment, of course. Will you teach me how to write an I O U?"

"No." Mr. Garnet looked up, with something very like a frown upon his face.

"Why not?"

"I don't wish for one. I would rather not have one."

"You will trust me for repayment?"

"Yes, I will trust you"—with a little laugh. "I suppose that you are too proud to accept the money as a gift; and if you were not too proud to receive, I am afraid that I am too poor to offer it. That hundred and fifty pounds

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is no inconsiderable part of some savings of mine, put by for a rainy day."

"I will pay you ten pounds every quarter."

"That will do."

"Good-bye; and thank you a thousand—a million times."

As Alice turned to leave, an end of ribbon fell to the ground from a muff which she held in her hand. She disappeared.

"If I had been a younger man"—Mr. Garnet did not again take up his billiard cue; he forgot all about his intended practice—"if I had been a younger man, Alice would never have asked me for money." He stood over the fire gazing, gazing fixedly down into the glowing coals.

"Francs!" he muttered. "Three thousand francs! Hum!"

Alice put in her head at the window.

"I say!"

"Well!"

"You are still there, then?"

"Yes."

"And alone?"

"Yes."

She came close up to him.

"You never asked what all the money was for. Would you like to know?"

"If you like to tell."

"Father asked, and asked, and asked. For that very reason"—with a wilful toss of the head—"I wouldn't let him know. You have never inquired; I'll tell you. I am dreadfully curious myself, Mr. Garnet; but I hate curiosity in other people. Well, then!"—Alice settled herself on a stool; she paused a moment, thinking how best to

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commence her story—"years and years ago, when our friend Father Francesco was quite a child, and lived with his mother, near a little Alpine village—which, by the way, I know quite well, and which is well worth a visit—he——"

"I thought that the priest's name was coming," growled the professor to himself.

"Oh! here you are!" called out Nosey, bursting into the billiard-room. "I'll give you twenty-five points, Mr. Garnet, in a game of billiards, and beat you like a shot—fifty up, you know. Come now, dare you play? Good morning, Alice! Have you come to see Fred?

"No, I haven't, Mr. Impudence."

"You've thrown Fred over, have you, my lady? Well, he does not seem very disconsolate. You'll find him in the stables, if you want him, Will you play, sir?" The boy turned to the professor.

"If you like."

Nosey had constituted himself Mr. Garnet's instructor in billiards, hockey—what not? Mr. Garnet was wondrously submissive.

The billiard balls rattled along the table. Alice moved away, looking back to nod in friendly fashion to the professor, and to make a pert grimace for the benefit of Master Nosey.

When she had fairly gone, and when Nosey (his back to the professor) was busy marking some break of his own, Mr. Garnet stooped and picked up the ribbon which had dropped from Alice's muff.

This ribbon he, very dishonestly, put into his own pocket.

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CHAP. XVII.—PRIESTLY COUNSEL.

WINTER passed—passed quietly and uneventfully enough for Father Francesco in his Marseilles retreat. Occasionally, only occasionally, he assisted in church services, or gave the benefit of his musical knowledge to ignorant choirs. He never preached—though Henri de Montbrison sometimes asked him to do so, though lazy priests were importunate that he should relieve them from the task of learning and delivering sermons. "I must save my health and strength for London," he said. With this object in view, he would not even tax his mental powers by much study.

Franz grew almost cheerful. The priest was always ready to afford him any amusement in his power; the society of Lucille and her husband was pleasant. And Madame D'Aulnais, Lucille's mother, who lived with the de Montbrisons, never tired of telling stories to "Monsieur Franz," as she knitted in her easy chair. The stories were not much in accordance with fact, for the old lady's memory failed her; but they were always entertaining, at any rate.

To Father Francesco himself, the few months which he spent in Marseilles would have been agreeable ones, but for certain annoyances—we shall hear their nature later—

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which, through the de Montbrisons, came upon the priest.

Spring came at last—even in England, a bright, genial spring. The priest's leisure was at an end.

Before he quitted Marseilles, he spoke with Franz on the subject of his departure. He was seated with the boy on a bench upon the shore. The blue waves of the Mediterranean danced in the sunlight; white sails shone out here and there upon the water; the scene was as pleasant a one as you could wish to see. The genial influence of the day brought a smile to Franz's face.

"Franz," said the priest, "my duties call me back to London. What will you do with yourself during my absence? Do you wish to return to Rome?"

"No, father." A look almost of terror crossed the boy's face.

"Memories of lost happiness throng upon you in Rome, my son. I understand—oh! how well I understand! Will you remain here, then, with Monsieur and Madame de Montbrison? I could make arrangements with them for you to do so. Or will you accompany me to London? I should delight in your companionship, dear lad." The priest's arm came round the boy. "But I fear—I fear—that you would not like England. Imagine, Franz"—pointing across the Mediterranean — "that blue sky changed to lead; imagine a dull, cold, grey tone everywhere, on landscape, houses—on the faces of people. Then you imagine England. The country—until close acquaintance had taught you its beauties—the country, coming after sunny Italy and France, would depress you, my boy. And I intend to lead in England a life differing widely from my life in Marseilles. I shall enter on greater retirement than I have ever known yet. I am afraid that

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so dull a life would be undesirable for you, Franz. Will you make the experiment? Will you come with me?"

"I think not, father."

"What will you do, then? Do you think of trying Germany once again?"

"I'll tell you what I will do, father. I have made up my mind already on the subject; for I have for some time anticipated the day when you must leave Marseilles. Let me say one word of thanks, father, for your kindness to me here. I have been happier, far happier, than I ever dreamed to be since—since—my dear Karl went home. Well! Some months ago I met accidentally, at a marriage in the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore, in Rome"—Franz shivered as he spoke the words—"an American lady, named—let me see whether I can remember the harsh foreign word—named Kimberley. She took an immense fancy to me. I don't know why—unless—unless"—a burning flush spread over the boy's sensitive face—"unless pity for my deformity was the secret of her liking. We met often. Miss Kimberley managed to scrape acquaintance with some Prussian friends of Karl's and mine in Rome. To their house the American lady and I were frequently invited together. Then, too, I saw her at concerts, churches—all sorts of places. If she caught sight of me in the street, she would cross the road, and run yards to catch me, just for a minute's conversation. And her conversation—in the most wonderful Italian which I have ever heard—was never worth the trouble which she took to make me understand it. Sometimes I answered in French, but she seemed to dislike the implied slight on her powers as a linguist. At last she left Rome—not before she had poked into every dirty little church, and inspected every gallery open to strangers. It seems

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to me, father, that Americans have a bewildering knack of looking up everything in the way of a 'lion'—whether they appreciate or not is, I suppose, another question. Before Miss Kimberley went, she offered, much to my surprise, to take me with her on a continental tour; she would only too gladly pay all expenses, she said. Afterwards I was to accompany her to America; she would adopt me, make me her heir. I think that I will accept her offer. I should like very well to live in her country, which is new, fresh—must be utterly different from old Rome. Miss Kimberley is middle-aged, very rich, vastly eccentric in appearance and manner. I wish that you could see her, father."

At the recollection of Miss Kimberley's personal peculiarities, the boy laughed till tears stood in his eyes.

The laugh determined Father Francesco. "Go with the lady, by all means," he said. "Where is she now?"

"In Holland, I believe; she intends to pass through Belgium, France, and Switzerland. She has already seen England, I think."

"Join her, my boy. She amuses you; and amusement is now your chief need. Think, too, of the charm of travel. You will see Brussels, Paris—will see my own Alps. Later, you will find beauties of scenery and climate in New England. The saints have you in their keeping, Franz!"

The priest came back to London—back to the Hammersmith home, to the little chapel, to hard work. He was glad to come.

Once again his sermons were "all the rage" in distinguished London Roman Catholic circles. Once again noble Romanist families courted his acquaintance. But now the priest refused all invitations into society. He led a life of strict rule.

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The Dashwoods were in town for the season. Alice, hearing of the priest's return from Marseilles, sent him one day, in her father's name and her own, an invitation to an evening reception. He declined to attend. Then arrived from Alice a request that he would join her and Mr. Dashwood at a quiet dinner—he should be the only guest. The priest answered in the negative. He did more. He wrote Alice a very cold letter, in which he excused himself from even paying a call at her house. He said that he considered vain any hope of renewing his acquaintance with the Dashwood family; differing interests and associations divided him from them. He had no time for formal visiting. But he was grateful for past kindnesses. He wished Alice and her father all happiness.

The distant tone of the letter astonished Alice. She tore the paper angrily.

"What has come over the priest?" she asked herself. "Has he forgotten our long talks at Dynton? We spoke then of lasting friendship. He is greatly changed."

May passed. July was over. Alice had not seen Father Francesco.

"Marie!"—she called to her French maid (the maid whose economy Alice had vaunted to Mr. Garnet)—"I am going to Hammersmith. You must accompany me."

It was an August afternoon.

"*Hammersmeeth*, ma'mselle! Where, then, is Hammersmeeth?"

"I have no idea. But I am going there. Call a glass coach, Marie; I'll not have the carriage. And fetch my bonnet."

In time Alice reached a shabby little Romanist chapel in Hammersmith. It was approached by a rough road across brickfields.

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Upon the chapel door was posted a list of hours of services. The list was a written one. And Alice recognised the handwriting.

"Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament daily, at four o'clock," she read. "What time is it now, Marie?"

"Twenty minutes past three."

"You are a Romanist—a Catholic, Marie?"

"But without doubt, ma'mselle."

"Do you know this chapel?"

"Not at all."

Alice pushed open a squeaking door, and passed in. Marie followed, devoutly crossing herself with holy water. A faint smell of stale incense pervaded the place. By the spell peculiar to remembered odours, Alice for a moment fancied herself in Rome. Beyond the thin mist she half expected to see familiar grand pictures; through the chancel window she looked for desolate temples, for orange trees, for citrons, for palms and stone pines, for a background of the quiet Campagna, with its boundary line of blue mountains.

But she was soon painfully conscious of the fact that she was in London. The tawdriness of Roman churches was here; but here were not, curiously mixed with tawdriness, works of consummate beauty.

Marie drew towards her a prie-dieu chair, and knelt down. Alice walked round the church. Miserable daubs, representing the stations of the Saviour, were hung about the walls. Here and there was a dirty card, on which was printed a request that the reader, "of his charity," would pray for the repose of some poor soul, who had exchanged this life for another. Confession-boxes were here. One of these confessionals bore the words, *Pour la langue Francaise.* A French *bonne* was confessing to

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an old French priest. The old man's stolid countenance was worth watching. He looked supremely indifferent; every now and then he took snuff. And yet the tale which the *bonne* told was, to judge from her tearful face, a very sad one.

Despicable taste was displayed in the decorations laid on side altars of the church. Here, in vases of flaring colour, were placed, as offerings to the particular saints of the altars, hideous artificial flowers, composed of paper, of shells, in one case of crochet worsted work.

Father Francesco, who was senior priest here, had ability and taste to honour and recognise art. The chiefs of the Roman Catholic Church have ever regarded art as a high and holy thing—one of the noblest gifts of the most benificent of givers. The priest's taste was offended by the contemptible decorations in his church. He would gladly have removed the objectionable flowers at least; but he remembered that these flowers were presented in most instances by the very poor. He looked from the gifts to the spirit of the givers. So the loaded vases remained. They appeared to serve chiefly as receptacles for a prodigious amount of dust. The high altar was adorned with lovely hot-house flowers, with great white lilies, with tiny clustering roses. Father Francesco's own judgment in arrangement had been exercised here. Through the flowers glimmered soft lights; and high above all hung a huge crucifix.

Alice sought a bench near the door, and far from the sacristy and the high altar. She wished to avoid the observation of the priest. "But I must see him once more—just this once," she told herself.

Many persons strayed into the chapel. First appeared two ragged Irish children; their size was so diminutive

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that it cost them a struggle to reach the holy water vessel. Next came a crippled man, who displayed much indecision in his choice of a convenient place in which to deposit crutches, by whose aid he had walked into the chapel. Afterwards arrived the charwoman who had witnessed Henri de Montbrison's marriage. Then, with a noise of rustling silk, a grandly-dressed French lady passed to a seat.

The church was very still. Silent prayer ascended from kneeling worshippers.

Alice knelt too. No words came from her lips. She gazed, with a long, rapt gaze, on the lighted altar, the flowers, the crucifix.

Her eyes wandered to a pulpit. She pictured Father Francesco's face looking down. She heard once more, in fancy, the sermon preached by him in her hearing in the Swiss church.

Sobbing, she stretched out her arms to him, moved again by his fervid eloquence.

"My darling!" The cry came whisperingly from her lips; it escaped her all unawares. "My darling!"

Then, confused, terrified, bewildered by the sound of her own words, she cowered low, and hid her face in her hands.

The French lady clattered her rosary. This day—the 25th of August—was a great day with her; it was the festival of her French saint, St. Louis. She thought of the solemn services doubtless held that day in Rome in the Church of San Luigi dei Francesi—St. Louis of the French. She remembered that "Last of the Crusaders," who, in the midst of his anguish, in Tunis, maintained as calm and placid a mien as when in old days he sat, crown on head and sceptre in hand, under the oaks in the wood of Vincennes.

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A shuffling step ascended the stairs to the organ loft. A blind old organist crept to his place there.

Soon a sharp, abrupt bell rang out—ting, tang, ting, tang. Then the organ sounded. The organist smiled as he bent over the keys; in music he found the one charm of his life.

Three ecclesiastics issued from the sacristy, and moved to the high altar. One priest was short and apoplectic, the same stolid priest who had confessed the *bonne*—his vestments, huddled round his neck, suggested an idea of suffocation; the second priest was a sallow-faced, not over-clean Italian; the third priest was Father Francesco.

A litany to the Virgin was chanted.

The Virgin was invoked by many different titles.

"Mater divinæ gratiæ."

"Mater purissima."

"Mater castissima."

"Mater inviolata."

And so on. And the congregation took up the appeal, *Ora pro nobis*—pray for us.

Soon two boy acolytes appeared from the vestry; they bore candles for the Benediction of the Host.

The old organist deserted his stool; he knelt upon the floor. But, first, he bent down, and—very stealthily, as though ashamed of his act—he laid his lips, with a tender caress, on the notes of the organ.

When the music ceased, profound silence reigned. The priest took the Host from the remonstrance.

A remonstrance is a glass box, mounted in gold or silver gilt, and placed on a pedestal. Such pedestals take the form of crosses.

The priest—he was Father Francesco—knelt long before the Host; he offered incense.

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Alice looked up. She had known nothing of the meaning of the rich Latin words which composed the litany that she had heard. But she had known that it was Father Francesco's voice which led the chanting. Full, deep, musical, it fell soothingly on her ear.

And now Father Francesco, standing on the highest step of the altar, turned to the people. High above his head he held the cross containing the Host. And for the blessing which that Host was believed to bestow, the people knelt.

The priest faced his people only for the space of three minutes. In that short time he saw Alice, though the girl shrank back in her corner.

An angry flush mounted to the priest's face. "The English girl!" he murmured under his breath. "She shall not come here, shall not seek me—shall not."

The service over, the priest, divested of his robes, and dressed in a long black cassock, hurried down the nave.

The organist came forward, with some questions about music for an approaching festival. His quick ear had detected Father Francesco's tread. But the priest pushed past him, in his anxiety to reach Alice before she left the church.

Soon he stood before her. The girl, kneeling in her corner, knew that the priest was near her, though she hardly raised her eyes. She caught a glimpse of a tall black figure bending towards her. Father Francesco's hands were clasped upon his breast; a stern look was on his face.

"What are you here for? This is no place for you." Very harsh was the priest's tone.

Alice rose. "How are you, father?" She stretched out her hand. The priest did not take it.

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"Why are you here?"

"I came"—Alice hesitated—"to—to hear the service."

"With your father's knowledge?"

No answer.

The black figure moved a step nearer.

"Did you come with your father's knowledge?"

"No."

"Then you acted very wrongly."

"The church is open to all, father," a little timidly.

"To all! Assuredly! But for purposes of worship, either private or congregational. Did you come here for worship, my daughter?"

Alice looked confused.

You acted very wrongly, I say. For shame! And what did you understand of the service, pray? There was not a sermon to-night."

"Perhaps I wished also"—Alice tried to regain her usual frank manner, but the priest's cold tone was embarrassing to her—"to see an old friend. I suppose that I may call you a friend, father."

The priest took up a missal, and turned it over absently in his hands. Then he looked through some pages of loose music lying on a chair near. Alice saw in a moment that those pages belonged to a mass whose music she had often played to the priest at Dynton. He laid both missal and music down, with a sudden, abrupt movement.

"Friend! Well, friend, in the sense of *companion*, certainly not. Circumstances forbid intercourse between you and me. My life is the life of a rigid disciplinarian. Renunciation of the world must, with me, be complete and final. I shall never visit you again; if time past could return, my stay with your father in Devonshire

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would not be made. You did very wrongly"—the priest took up the missal, and brought his hand down upon it sharply, as though by show of action to enforce his words —"you did very wrongly; you did your own Church dishonour when you sought me here. Strange that I—a Catholic priest—should have to remind you of the reverence which you owe to your Church."

Alice looked up to the priest's stern face. How it had changed since the days when it kindled with enthusiasm while his voice told to Alice legends of Saint Sebastian, Saint Laurence, Saint Pancratius. In the priest's face Alice—foolish child—had seen, in fancy, the face of each hero of the legends. "He is most like Saint Sebastian," she had said—"like my own young, brave, grand Sebastian."

A little offended, Alice left the church. The priest followed her.

"Are you all well at home?" he asked, unbending just a little, as he walked with Alice along the rough road.

"Quite well."

"Your sister, Lady Hilton, lives not very far from my present church, I think. I heard of her the other day in Kensington."

"She has taken a house in Kensington. Now tell me about your health, father."

"Better."

"Shall you leave England next winter?"

"Doctors say that I must. And since circumstances compel me to go from my work here, I hope to be able at last to fulfil the dream of my life, and to spend one Easter in Jerusalem. You remember, perhaps, that I told you at Dynton of my life-dream?"

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"Yes."

"Last winter my health forbade the exertion of so long a journey. But during all the idle time which I spent in Marseilles, I looked forward to this coming winter, when I hoped to make my pilgrimage. Once, while I was in Marseilles, my wishes seemed doomed to destruction."

"How?" in a faint voice.

The priest, speaking on a subject near his heart, forgot that it was Alice whom he was addressing, and his tone was almost cordial.

"I was living with the de Montbrisons. Through Lady Hilton, who visited the de Montbrisons for a short time, you may have heard that Henri and his wife were much disturbed by money difficulties, results of unsuccessful speculations. I had counselled Henri's haste in marriage. I had thus indirectly brought increase of expense upon him; I could do no less than, in his need, help him to the utmost of my power. In this way three thousand francs—all my savings for the Palestine excursion—were swallowed."

Alice's head was turned away.

"A week or so after I paid the money, it was returned to me from England. The whole sum was sent anonymously—a gift, no doubt, from some wealthy and charitable member of my congregation. How the knowledge of my necessity was gained, I cannot tell. But now again I may hope to visit Palestine next spring."

No answer. No sign of interest.

The priest and Alice had reached a rough stile, barring the way to more brickfields.

Father Francesco paused. "Good-bye," he said, just raising his hat.

"Good-bye. And you really will not come to see us

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before we leave London? We start for Dynton next month, and shall remain there till October."

"And I go from England early in November. Whether I shall ever return to this country, I cannot tell. I may be sent to Berlin."

"Do you mean to say that this is possibly our last meeting?"

"Most probably. For even if I come back to London, we shall be quite divided. Good-bye."

Coldly, as though taking leave of a stranger, the priest extended his hand. What fund of compassion was in his heart, his manner hid.

Is this the end of a friendship which in Dynton promised durability?

A chill crept over Alice.

She stood before Father Francesco, motionless and mute.

"Come, good-bye," repeated the priest, hastily.

He just touched Alice's passive hand, and moved off.

Alice did not turn her head to look after him. She stood quiet, as in a trance. Dreamily, dreamily, her eyes sought the red sun sinking in the heavens.

Before that sun shall set, Alice will have looked her very last on a face strangely dear to her—Father Francesco's face.

Her last! Some presentiment taught her the truth.

And she loved this man — this Father Francesco. Priestly vows divided him from her—gave him a high place, to her unattainable. She knew all this. And she knew, too—knew at last what the priest had known for some time—known with infinite pity and sorrow, but with no particle of answering love—that her heart was all his own.

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A touch came on her shoulder. Father Francesco had returned.

"Can I speak to you a moment, my daughter?"

There was a shade of his old kindness in the tone of the priest's voice, and Alice turned to him gladly.

"Ah! yes."

"I may take some time. Will you sit down?"

Alice sat on the stile. Marie stood patiently at some little distance.

A dreary view was around Alice—a view common to most London suburbs—a view of brick walls, of small square or oblong gardens, of here and there a smoke-grimed tree. But upon all the dreariness the August sun shone—illuminating, glorifying.

"When I left your home last summer," began the priest, speaking very quickly, "I went with Mr. Garnet to Oxbridge."

"Yes."

Alice, looking up, saw the tall, black figure of the priest stooping over her—saw a great earnestness in his eyes.

"I like Mr. Garnet very much. Do you like him?"

"Oh yes."

"Child, he loves you with his whole strength. Love him, if you can. He is a grand fellow—not your ideal of a lover, not ready with protestations of affection; he is diffident—diffident to a fault; he dares not tell you of his love. He is middle-aged, clumsy, sometimes over quiet, sometimes over noisy; but he is a scholar, a gentleman, and, what is better still—oh! far, far best of all—he is a man of generous and loyal heart."

No answer. But Alice, with a start of utter, blank astonishment, turned her head from the priest.

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FATHER FRANCESCO COUNSELLING ALICE.

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"I surprise you. You were unprepared for this. If Mr. Garnet were this evening to make you an offer of his hand, you would refuse it. But try to accustom yourself to the thought of his love—try to learn the nobility of his character. And when the day dawns on which he lays at your feet the devotion of his life, you may have taught yourself to requite his great love with some little love of your own."

Still no answer.

"Alice"—the priest comes very near—"we part to-night. We have been friends. Give me the great joy—you cannot tell how great—of looking forward to a time when you will accept happiness. Child, I want to think of you happy."

Still silence.

"You like Mr. Garnet?"

"Oh yes. But—but——"

"The rest will come. I hope—I hope—that the rest will come. Good-bye."

The priest was gone.

Alice sat still on the stile. She had been listening in a dream. Her mind retained little of what Father Francesco had said. She did not think of Mr. Garnet; she hardly thought of the priest. She gazed, with a rapt gaze, on the sinking sun.

The priest, walking to his poor home, thought of Alice. His sternness had been all affected; his determination for the future to avoid Alice was prompted by kindness.

"If we do meet again, I will be fiercer than ever," he said to himself. "Alice shall grow to hate me. So much the better for Garnet; so much the better for her own peace."

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"Poor child!"—he looked after her stealthily—"poor child!"

Then he thought of Virginie—thought, with a desperate longing in his heart to see her face again.

Alice went home too. Her face was weary. But a smile lighted it once, when a glad thought came to her.

"One triumph is mine," she said. "The priest does not know—shall never know—that the Palestine pilgrimage, on which he has set his heart, will be brought about by my instrumentality, through *my* gift of money—*mine*."

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CHAP. XVIII.—HOW THE WORLD GOES ROUND!

FOUR years passed away.

Alice Dashwood was Alice Dashwood still. The childish expression had not left—would never leave—her face; her voice had its old frank ring.

Since her visit to the Hammersmith chapel she had not seen Father Francesco. Of her visit she never spoke. Marie was charged to keep silence on the subject.

Alice has heard of the priest—has heard him roundly abused by some unwise and zealous Protestants—has heard an outcry against his work in London. That that work had been conscientiously and laboriously done, whether the Church in whose cause it was executed were a misguided one or not, she never doubted.

Father Francesco's excursion to Palestine was not yet made. His desire to make it was strong as ever. Each winter he had left London, but work had been found for him in a southern climate, and a long pilgrimage had been impossible. He had assisted in taking charge of a Church in a village among the Pyrennees. Visitors thronged there in the winter months, and the services of an extra number of priests were required at that time. Christmas had been celebrated with much *éclat*—with special sermons, with carefully-prepared music. Father

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Francesco had found plenty of work to be done. He began to wonder whether he should ever have much leisure time to call his own.

Next Easter, however, enough leisure for his excursion, at any rate, is to be allowed him. Next Easter he hopes, at last, to pay a visit—necessarily a hurried one—to the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem.

His health has improved. Hard work agrees with him, makes him the man that he is—self-reliant, resolute.

Mr. Garnet had seen Alice frequently during these four years. He made opportunities of seeing her. Each long vacation he went to Dynton, for to that village the Dashwoods invariably betook themselves for the summer. He spent two Christmas vacations at the Dashwoods' house—one with the Hendersons, hard by. Fred Henderson had left college; he chose the army as a profession; he turned up his nose at his father's business.

Mr. Garnet had grown as fond as Alice herself of Dynton and Dynmouth. From sailors and fishermen he received quite a welcome on each fresh arrival there. Ned Groves—Father Francesco's friend—shook hands always with the professor; all the other men liked him.

Mr. Garnet had not spoken to Alice of his love. He was rooted as ever in his determination not to speak of it.

Every quarter he had received from Alice, in part payment of his loan of money, the sum of ten pounds. The important business character which Alice gave to those transactions vastly amused the professor. He greatly regretted that the whole sum which he lent to Alice had been repaid to him now.

Alice often thought—she could not but think—of Father Francesco's revelation about Mr. Garnet's feelings towards her.

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At first the thought was an unwelcome one.

It proved well for his cause that Mr. Garnet had hitherto made no declaration of his affection. Had he done so when his love first awoke in his heart, Alice would have declared it utterly impossible ever to return that love.

As it was, the very quietness of the professor's affection touched the girl at last. He asked nothing at her hands. His devotion was unexacting as it was deep.

Mr. Garnet became well known in Dodderley. The rector often enlisted his services as preacher.

The parish of Dodderley was in a chronic state of curate-anarchy. Young curates, old curates, middle-aged curates, curates of mental power, curates of mediocre intellect, curates of no intellect to speak of, curates of high family, curates of low descent, came and went. None held office longer than six months. One and all, they rebelled against the authority usurped over them, from her father, by Phœbe Weston, the rector's daughter. Alice Dashwood sided with the curates. A hundred times she told Mr. Garnet that she hated Phœbe—hated her for her dictatorial manner, and her habit of interference.

"I am sure," she said, "that the last curate—his name was Tubal Jones; did you ever hear such a combination?—was one of the best men in the world. He had week-day services in rooms at distant parts of the parish. Every one liked him; the dissenting ministers were quite jealous of his success. Morning, noon, and night he was at the service of the poorest; his whole time was given up to work. But Phœbe's conduct to him was ungrateful, insufferable. She criticised his sermons before his face, till I felt indignant for him. Report said—mind! I do not altogether believe report—that, before he left, Phœbe

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instituted a plan of making Mr. Jones read over to her every Saturday his sermon for the next day. At length the poor man plucked up spirit to go from the parish in a rage. He left behind him, as a gift to his landlady, a dog which, while he lodged in Dodderley, had learned a trick of always flying at Phœbe's heels. Remembering the creature's propensity, Mr. Jones hoped that the dog would always have a home in the village.

"Whatever you do," continued Alice, lifting up a warning finger, and eyeing Mr. Garnet archly, "don't be tempted to marry Phœbe. She has matrimonial designs upon you, I believe; else why does she praise your sermons so extravagantly?"

This banter the professor did not answer.

Four years had not made a younger man of our friend, Mr. Garnet. His hair was greyer, his face more time-worn. He laughed grimly at his own image whenever he caught sight of it in a looking-glass.

About this time was published a book which made a stir in the literary world. It was wonderfully well written.

The book treated, in an intelligent and exhaustive manner, of the history of the Church of the Catacombs. That the Church of the Catacombs was the Roman Church—that since the very earliest days of Christianity no material change had taken place in the government or opinions of the Church of Rome—the book's author strove to prove. The author was Father Francesco.

Complimentary reviews of the work appeared in several London journals. The book was declared to be a marvel of accurate English; and the fact that its writer was a foreigner added much to his fame.

Mr. Garnet read the book—read the reviews. He happened to be in Dodderley when the reviews appeared.

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Poring over a newspaper critique, he was seated one morning in Alice's drawing-room. He had taken his station on an easy-chair near to her work-table.

The girl watched his face as he read. At last he threw down his paper.

"Well?"

"Well!"

"You have been devouring praise of Father Francesco's book?"

"Yes."

Then there was silence.

"Mr. Garnet."

"Alice?"

"Have you read the book itself?"

"Yes."

"Do you admire it?"

"Yes."

"You are monosyllabic this morning. Tell me—don't take the newspaper up again; there is nothing interesting in it this morning—tell me, do you think these reviewers' praise just?"

Mr. Garnet rose, and leaned over the mantelpiece.

"Yes," he said slowly, in rather a reluctant voice. "The book is very clever, the arguments thoughtful, the language well chosen. But——"

"But what?"

"Child," burst forth Mr. Garnet passionately, "why do you ask me? I don't know. I am the last man to be a competent judge of this fellow's productions. I am—I am—jealous of him."

"Jealous! You, Mr. Garnet! You, of all people in the world!"

"Why not?"

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"You are famous yourself as an author. You have written—dear me! I forget the names of the books, but you have written, I know, all sorts of learned things; and people have spoken well of them. Why should you grudge another writer a few words of commendation?"

"It isn't the priest's literary fame—just or unjust—of which I am jealous." Mr. Garnet's voice was very low.

"Then what——?" Alice did not complete her question. One glance from Mr. Garnet somehow silenced her. She coloured a little, and her eyes dropped.

"I'd give my fame—it's not much, but it is the meed of a life's exertion—I'd give my scholarship—I have not anything else worth giving—to be once more a young man, young as the priest. I am envious of his youth, for one thing."

No reply.

Presently Mr. Garnet, with a contemptuous grin at his past vehemence, left his position near the fire, and settled himself in his chair. He took up the paper, and looked at the money article.

It was a chilly morning. In the grate, coals were burning brightly. Alice's drawing-room was a snug, warm room on a winter's morning; a pretty room it always was. Alice had exercised her own taste in the choice of furniture.

The girl bent now over the blaze. Her fingers were busy performing some indescribable work with gay-coloured wools.

"Mr. Garnet."

"Alice?"

"Have you seen Father Francesco lately?"

"No. Have you?"

"Not for four years. He has cut me altogether," in a tone of pique.

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Mr. Garnet looked up quickly, but he said nothing.

He has cut me altogether! Lately, Alice had worked herself into something very like indignation against the priest. She had often been in his near neighbourhood; she had paid long visits to her sister, Lady Hilton, who, as we have seen, had taken a house in Kensington. I do not think that Alice would like me to tell you how often she had watched from her sister's windows to see Father Francesco passing in the street; but he seemed never to walk her way; Alice fancied that he avoided her. Lady Hilton would willingly have entertained him; she had a great fancy for him. More than that, aristocratic Romanist friends, of whose opinion she thought very much, had reported favourably on the priest. But he refused to respond to Lady Hilton's kindness.

When Father Francesco's seeming scorn was most present to Alice's mind, then with most gratitude did she think of Mr. Garnet's constancy.

The professor was always at her beck and call. One day, child-like, Alice delighted to display in public her power over him; she issued commands right royally. On the next day, conscience-smitten, she abdicated her throne, and refused to act in any matter without Mr. Garnet's advice.

"Will he ever speak to me of this love of his?" she wondered. And by subtle degrees, imperceptible to herself, she learned to look upon his love as a great possession.

By-and-by Mr. Garnet's visit to Dodderley came to a close. He returned to Oxbridge.

Ding, ding—ding, ding—dong, dong, dong. The Dodderley church bells were ringing like mad.

Dodderley appeared to be in a state of rare excitement

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one frosty December morning. See the school-children arrayed in their spiciest garments, and holding baskets containing evergreens and Christmas roses! Behold the Dodderley hairdresser running, like one distraught, towards the rectory! All Dodderley assembled near the church.

Ding, ding, ding! A day which poor Tubal Jones had longed after, and never really expected to see—a day, of whose advent he, in his distant Welsh home, was ignorant, had dawned at last.

Ding, ding! It was Phœbe Weston's wedding-day.

The soul of the latest curate rejoiced as he tied on the choicest of his white chokers. His enemy was about to leave the rectory.

The soul of the Dodderley hairdresser was disquieted within him. Miss Weston had ordered that his art should be brought to bear upon her head. Her short crop of hair was stubborn, and refused to submit to barber's designs.

But at last the coiffure was finished somehow, and a wreath of orange flowers surrounding it added to its beauty.

Ding, ding! Carriages, with white horses, were driven frantically through the streets. Upon the town a rain of white satin favours appeared to descend.

Dodderley Church was full—full to overflowing. The marriage service—the quaint, time-honoured English marriage service—was read—read by the pompous old rector for once in a quavering voice.

Troth was plighted, a ring given, a blessing pronounced.

And two travellers along the road of life put in their lot together, and promised to make the long journey hand in hand.

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The curate assisted in the service. His voice in the wedding hymn was remarked as specially jubilant. In the vestry he made jokes, and lamented the absence of bridesmaids. Miss Weston scorned the idea of bridesmaids.

Two days later, Mr. Garnet, sitting in his Oxbridge study, and glancing hurriedly through a newspaper, came upon the following announcement:—

"On the 20th instant, at the parish church, Dodderley, Lancashire, by the Reverend Theobald Weston, assisted by the Reverend Marston Derwent, John Dashwood, of Oak House, Dodderley, and of the firm of Dashwood and Henderson, Manchester, to Phœbe, only child of the Reverend Theobald Weston, rector of Dodderley, and late Fellow of St. Barnabas' College, Camford."

Mr. Garnet dropped the newspaper. Open-eyed, open-mouthed, he stared helplessly at the fire.

Presently he rose, and paced up and down his room. Then he rang his bell, pulling it so hard that the wire broke.

A gyp appeared.

"Matthew!"

"Sir?"

"At what time does the next coach leave Oxbridge, do you know?"

"I'll step out and ask, sir. In half-an-hour, I think, sir."

"Book me a place, if you can. I'm going to Manchester."

The gyp stared. But he left the room without a word.

Mr. Garnet packed up—not very neatly, I am afraid, for neatness was not the professor's *forte*—a few articles of dress.

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Very soon he was in the coach.

"A sudden move, this marriage," he thought, when he had time to think. "My little Alice, with Phœbe for a stepmother!"

In spite of his concern, he laughed a little at the picture which his fancy conjured up.

"Poor little Alice! Such a charming little hostess! She will hate her home now."

"Perhaps—perhaps"—a half shy, half eager look came to the professor's face, and gave it almost a boyish expression—"perhaps, circumstanced as she now is, she might——"

"Very cold to-day, sir," said, in a cheery voice, Mr. Garnet's nearest neighbour, a hearty-looking farmer.

"Very." Mr. Garnet answered without an idea what the statement was which he confirmed.

"Perhaps, circumstanced as she is, deprived of her position as mistress in her home, saddled to a companion whom she detests, she might—might——"

"The best thing as I knows on for these bitter mornings," went on the farmer, graciously communicative, "is just one wine-glass of rum, taken with a biscuit, before starting."

"I beg your pardon."

"Rum, sir. Don't you think so?"

The coach gave a great jolt.

"Perhaps she might—bring herself to share—my own home."

That daring thought once confessed to himself, Mr. Garnet revelled in it silently; he never allowed his mind to wander therefrom.

What Father Francesco's advice of long ago—advice well meant, well considered—could not do, Mr. Dash-

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wood's marriage should effect — it should open Mr. Garnet's mouth. He would offer himself to Alice as her husband.

In time he reached his destination. His umbrella and overcoat were carried on in the coach.

"An absent man—that there," remarked the farmer to the coach guard, when Mr. Garnet's possessions were discovered.

At last Mr. Garnet reached Mr. Dashwood's house.

"Is Miss Dashwood at home?"

"No, sir."

Mr. Garnet's countenance fell.

"You expect her in before night, I suppose?"

"No, sir. She has left home. She is in Dynton."

"Dynton!" Mr. Garnet gave a low whistle.

"Dynton, in North Devonshire, sir."

"Yes, yes, I know. Well! I must go to Dynton. When did Miss Dashwood leave here?"

"Will you step in a moment, sir?"

The servant, a middle-aged, respectable-looking woman, well known to Mr. Garnet, beckoned him into the hall.

She shut the front door with a violent bang.

"Miss Dashwood left, sir," she began, in a tone of stifled indignation, "the day before — before — the *wedding*." The indignation culminated on the last word. "Miss Dashwood, she ain't a-going to put up with any Miss Phœbes"—volumes could not describe the scorn put into the name—"a-domineering in this house, I can tell you. No more ain't I. I am a-going too, sir."

"And Miss Dashwood——"

"Ain't never coming back, sir—so she says. The wedding, it took us all just by surprise like, sir. Miss Alice, pretty dear, she stormed out tremendous. She

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persuaded Mrs. and Miss Henderson to take her to lodgings in Dynton. There she'll stay with them, I reckon, till she has made some plans for the future. I sometimes wonder, sir—— "

"What?"

"Whether, perhaps, there'll be another wedding in the family, with young Mr. Henderson a bridegroom."

Mr. Garnet scowled.

He followed Alice to Dynton.

Dynton, in winter, is a wild village indeed. Here the north wind holds his court; here huge waves toss and fret; here storms rage frequently. In winter, Dynton and Dynmouth are left almost entirely to fishermen and sailors.

Dear old Dynton! I like you best in winter! Your wildness charms me.

Mr. Garnet was the only guest at the inn. Meeting Ned Groves, the professor asked for information as to Alice's whereabouts. Ned Groves was always well posted up in the visitors' list. Mr. Garnet found that Alice and the Hendersons had taken rooms at a small house not far from the hotel.

To this house he betook himself.

Cissy Henderson appeared at the door. Cissy was a chatterbox. She commenced upon Mr. Garnet.

"How are you? Where in the world did you spring from? Come in, do. It's dreadfully dull in Dynton; visitors are very welcome. When did you arrive? Yes, mamma is very well, thank you; and Nosey, and Frank, and everyone. Alice? Oh, Alice has gone for a constitutional—along the North Walk, I think she said. I couldn't make up my mind to go too. Of course you have heard the news—the news about Mr. Dashwood, I

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mean? What does Alice say? Well! she's cross—I must say she's cross. Do you know, Mr. Garnet, that at one time your name was mentioned in connection with Phœbe's. It was, indeed. You want to join Alice on the North Walk! Very well. Do you remember the way? Turn sharp to the left at the end of this lane, and then——"

"I remember the way very well, Miss Henderson.

The "North Walk" is a narrow coast road, cut out of the rocks.

Thither Mr. Garnet wended his way. Presently, to his surprise, he met Fred Henderson. He had not expected to see that gentleman here. A hang-dog expression was on young Henderson's face. Mr. Garnet interpreted that expression thus—

"Henderson has been making a fool of himself. He has taken advantage of Alice's desertion of her home to renew his solicitations for her hand. I am going to make a greater fool of myself—I, an old fogy, bordering upon fifty."

He passed Henderson with a nod.

Soon he saw Alice approaching. He knew her at a long distance. When she came nearer, he saw that the girl had been crying. Her eyes were red and swollen.

She was walking along, discontentedly enough. She pushed idly with her feet loose stones upon the path. Every now and then she stood still, and looked thoughtfully over the sea. Behind her was the "Castle Rock," one of the greatest natural wonders in the West of England. Around that "Palace of pre-Adamite Kings," as Southey calls the rock, mystery hovers. After the first sight of its loneliness and grandeur, Southey wrote, "I never felt the sublimity of solitude before."

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To the stormy beauty around him Mr. Garnet paid little heed; his eyes were on Alice.

Concerning Fred Henderson, Mr. Garnet's guess was a correct one. The young man had again been pleading his cause with Alice. The interview had not terminated satisfactorily.

Alice's face was annoyed and wearied. Mr. Garnet had never before seen it wear so vexed a look.

Suddenly she caught sight of the professor. In a moment her countenance brightened. She rushed forward.

"Gay!" she said, almost seizing his hand; and Mr. Garnet's heart gave one great bound, as he heard the name which had escaped Alice unawares. "How pleased I am to see you, Gay! You are the last person whom I expected to meet."

He murmured something unintelligible.

"You have heard of my trouble, I suppose, and have come to condole with me."

He looked down upon her. An unutterable longing was in his eyes.

"I came partly for that reason, partly and chiefly on another errand." He turned his face away, that Alice should not read upon it his emotion.

He gazed, as she had done, over the great grey sea. Sea-gulls skimmed the waves, or flew inland among the rocks.

"Does it often happen in a girl's life," wondered Mr. Garnet, "that she receives two offers of marriage in one and the same day. Does it ever happen that such a girl chooses, from the rival candidates for her favour, the older, the poorer, the more prosaic of the two?"

"Alice!" He turned his head. His face had regained

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its calmness. Only his voice, low, agitated, betrayed the intensity of his feeling.

"Alice!"

They were alone, those two. No living creature was within sight. The lament of the waves, the wail of the wind, were the only sounds in their ears.

"Alice!" The passion in the low cry thrilled the listening girl. She stood motionless, waiting for what Mr. Garnet had to say.

"Alice! for four—for five—for six years, I have loved you intensely, utterly—loved you as man can love but once in all his life."

He paused a moment. His breath came so fast that speech was difficult.

Alice did not move, did not raise her head.

"Other men may seek you—men infinitely worthier your hearing than I—worthier at least in all respects but one—they will not love you more dearly than I do. Be quite, quite sure of this. Alice, for my love's sake—I have no merit to plead—for my great love's sake, will you be my wife?"

No answer. Alice's head still dropped shyly.

He caught her by both hands.

"I love you—I love you, Alice Dashwood."

His voice broke. "I must tell you so this once, if I am mute afterwards for ever. I love you. No man will ever love you more dearly than I do."

Silence, utter silence.

Above towered the "stately hills, which seemed to keep watch and ward over the professor's love, to shut out from him the noisy world." Below rolled the solemn sea.

In Alice's silence, in her attitude, Mr. Garnet read rejection. A sharp pain thrilled his heart. But his first

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thought in the moment of what he deemed rejection was an unselfish one—he must comfort Alice for the pain which she must feel in paining him.

He bent over her soothingly.

"I am too old, little one." How the voice struggled to regain its old even tone! How the face quivered in its effort to be brave! "My youth has passed; with youth has gone the time for love-dreams. Well! tell me so. Lift your face to mine, child; smile once on me your own merry smile, and I'll—I'll—bear the rest."

"Hush! don't cry!"—for the sound of a low sob had caught the professor's ear; he drew the girl to him; he laid his hand caressingly upon her head—"above all things, don't cry in pity for me. I've been an old fool, love. Forget my folly, and forgive me. If I have dreamed sometimes of a home of mine made bright by your presence, if I have dreamed of a future spent by your side, I have never, never in my sober senses, held myself worthy the fulfilment of those dreams."

"Gay!"

"My child?"

"Dear Gay!"

Mr. Garnet started.

"If father hadn't—hadn't"—with a half hysterical burst, partly laughter, partly tears—"hadn't gone and married Phœbe, detestable old Phœbe, you wouldn't"—the voice changed and softened—"you wouldn't have spoken to me of this love of yours, would you?"

"I suppose not."

"Then I am glad that he did marry—there."

"Take care what you say, Alice." Gay's arms tightened round the girl; his voice shook with passion. "You don't know what meaning I may give to your words."

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Alice struggled and escaped. But she grasped the professor's arm with both her hands, and looked into his face.

"I am glad—glad that I am homeless, since but for my homelessness your generous love would not have bidden me share your lot. And I was grieved, so grieved, at first. Father is lost to me—my dear old father. But our division is of his seeking; he has learned"—the girl's lip quivered—"learned to find his happiness without me. Very fond is my memory of all that he once was to me. I think of him now tenderly, regretfully—think as I think of my dead mother, who left me years ago."

A minute's pause.

"Dear Gay, I have long known of your love for me." Alice was looking up at him, with great, soft eyes, full of deep tenderness. "I should not have found it out for myself, I think. Four years ago a friend of mine discovered the truth, and told it to me. Since then I have been very sure of your love; I have wondered what in me had power to call it forth, in all its strength and constancy."

He smoothed away the hair which fell over her forehead. He looked down into her earnest eyes.

With a sudden cry, she threw herself into his arms. "Love me always, Gay; for now I have no one but you to care for me—no one else in the wide world!"

Homeward they went, quite quietly, under the grey sky. The wind danced round them, muttering mysterious whispers, as though it guessed their secret. Once they paused, clasped each other's hands afresh, and gazed silently down into each other's eyes.

Mr. Garnet had won his wife at last.

"One confession I must make, Gay," Alice said, at

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length speaking very slowly, and with averted face; "you shall be under no false impression about me."

He smiled. He had no dread of anything which she might have to tell.

"First, then—but promise not to be very, very sorry, dear old Gay."

He shook his head.

"First, then, I do not love you yet as you love me—not quite."

"Oh no, no." He spoke with an effort. It was almost painful to him to break his silence, a silence laden with delicious thoughts.

"But I shall love you better every day."

"My darling!"

"Wait one moment. I have something more to say." Alice stopped short in her walk. Her face flushed scarlet. "I will tell you all the truth—all. I have loved—loved very dearly and jealously—someone, not you." Her voice sank to a whisper. Her hands covered her eyes.

"Alice! Darling! Look up. Hush! I know—oh! I know."

She put him from her.

"My love was always, in the nature of things, hopeless; and it was returned—circumstances have lately proved that it was returned—by supreme indifference."

What could Gay say to the child? He said nothing. But his grasp tightened on her hand.

"Gay," she said, suddenly, "you remember your loan to me of three thousand francs?"

"Yes."

"It will defray the expenses of a journey which Father Francesco will take next Easter to the Holy Land."

"Yes."

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"He sadly wanted the money. I sent it to him—sent it anonymously. Lady Hilton told me of his need; and I knew that all his life he had earnestly wished to make this journey to Jerusalem. His desire will be soon gratified—gratified through me."

"Yes."

"Gay"—throwing herself upon his neck—"Father Francesco was the 'someone' of whom I spoke." Alice burst into a passion of weeping.

Gay stooped over her, right tenderly. He kissed the tears from her eyes.

"I knew, little one—I knew all along. Confound the priest!"

"No, no, no. We must thank him; for it was he who showed me your love. His appreciation of you taught me your worth. And as I have watched your love—strong, silent, steadfast; as I have contrasted it with the scorn with which, during these four years, the priest has, for some hidden reason of his own, thought fit to treat me, my whole heart has gone out to you in gratitude for your goodness. Do not fear but that that gratitude will grow to love."

They reached Alice's lodgings.

All through the day they remained together. When evening came—beautiful evening! with her myriad stars—they stood at the threshold of the door; they looked up to the vast sky. Mr. Garnet took leave for the night.

"Is this my wife?"

"Yours—only yours, dear Gay."

The moon rose from behind the hills. Rugged coast, wild sea, were bathed in light. "Hush!" said Alice, suddenly. "Listen a moment. What is that sound?"

There was nothing.

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"It was my fancy, I suppose. Curiously enough, Gay"—she twined her hands with her favourite movement round his arm—"ever since father's marriage, I have fancied at times—fancied quite angrily, for I was very indignant at first, you know—that I could hear on the air the chime of his marriage bells. Listen to their peal. Don't you hear them? Ding, dong, ding, dong—the Dodderley church bells."

With a gay smile the professor lifted Alice's face to his. "I hear," he said, merrily. "But you mistake. The chime is of our own wedding bells, our own—yours and mine."

Right well has Charles Dickens written—

"Oh! there are days in life which are worth life and worth death. And oh! it is a good old song which says that it is love, love, love which makes the world go round."

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CHAP. XIX.—A DIAMOND RING.

A WINTER'S day in Marseilles.

Lucille de Montbrison was busying herself, if truth must be told, in her kitchen. If truth must be told, she often busied herself there—more often than English ladies care to do. The de Montbrisons were very poor; and Lucille's care and management helped to eke out their scanty means.

Her toilette was suited to her occupation. Saying this, I do not say that it was soiled or untidy—I am writing of a Frenchwoman, please, not of an Englishwoman. Lucille wore an apron, but the daintiest and most coquettish of spotless aprons, with a pocket here and a bow there; a short-sleeved dress displayed plump white arms. A bright fire burned in the grate; wonderful cookery was going on.

Lucille sang over her work—

"Nanna m'appelle,
Elle est si belle,
Moi, je l'aime tant."

A Colonel de Latour was expected to dinner, and Lucille was determined to do her best in preparations for his visit. Colonel de Latour was not the colonel of her husband's regiment, but of a regiment stationed near Lyons. He was a stranger at Marseilles. Henri de

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Montbrison was distantly related to him, and was anxious to show him hospitality.

"I wish that we were not so badly off for crockery and glass," sighed Lucille. "Father Francesco and Franz, between them, broke my last claret glass. It's true that they left money to pay for a new one, but the money went towards buying a pair of shoes." Lucille looked at her feet—pretty little feet—covered with the trimmest of shoes of the Louis Quinze shape.

"Ah, well! I must borrow some glasses of Madame la Générale."

And still Lucille sang gaily—

"Nanna m'appelle,
Elle est si belle,
Moi, je l'aime tant."

To her dinner, when cooked and served, too much praise cannot be accorded. The colonel arrived—an old man, tall, spare, punctiliously polite. He did full justice to the meal.

A little girl of twelve—a girl with a very clean face and a diminutive mob-cap—was the only waitress. Her powers were truly wonderful.

The captain of Henri's regiment was also a guest at dinner, and old Madame d'Aulnais, Lucille's mother, who lived with the de Montbrisons, took her place at table.

Since her husband's death, Madame d'Aulnais had not been her old self. Her memory wandered; she grew almost imbecile.

On some days, it is true, her recollections of old times were vivid; on other days, she could answer the simplest questions only with a painful and evident effort of mind.

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This day she took small part in conversation ; she sat almost silent at dinner. Voices buzzed round her ; she paid little heed to them. She was lost in hazy remembrances of bygone events, of a splendid country home in France, of a poor house in Paris, of a poorer one in a London slum. But all was indistinct and misty.

The colonel, once or twice, addressed himself to the handsome old Frenchwoman; her face pleased him much. She answered with many French bows, but with few words, and those few not very confidently spoken.

Before dinner was over she rose hastily.

"Excuse me, my friends," she said, bowing profoundly ; "I am *désolée* to leave you hurriedly, but am called away."

She walked to the door; Lucille stopped her. "What is it, mother?" she asked.

"Hush ! *L'enfant pleure*," said the old woman, laying her finger on her lip.

And off she went upstairs to her room, fancying that the old days had returned—old days, when she was first a mother, and children's cries had called for her tender soothing.

There was a pause—rather an awkward pause—then conversation proceeded as before.

The dinner was a great success. Madame La Générale had sent, not only claret glasses, but also two bottles of prime Burgundy to fill them. Toasts went round—"The guests," "The host and hostess," "The French army." Lucille drank "The Church," and thought of Father Francesco, his timely loans of money, his friendship.

Then everyone left the dining-room for a little *salon* looking on the sea. Here they found Madame d'Aulnais complacently knitting. Lucille dived into the kitchen to

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produce coffee. Colonel de Latour sought the old lady's side.

"Madame," he said, softly, "surely, surely your name is familiar to me—d'Aulnais——"

"It may be, Monsieur le Colonel. Be seated, sir, I beg." The old head was raised only a moment from the knitting.

"D'Aulnais—a fine old name. There was a noble family so called in Poitou."

"Poitou! Yes, yes, Poitou!" Bewildered eyes seek the colonel's—eyes which pitifully speak the old lady's anxiety not to show that she forgets—forgets.

"In my regiment was once a grand old man of your name—a man who lost everything for the Bourbons, who served them faithfully through their long adversity. He—but surely—no! that could not be. Your husband, madame——"

"His name was Gustave."

"Pardon, madame."

"You must not contradict. His name was Gustave. I remember. How could I forget?"

"Assuredly you have not forgotten. But your husband, madame?" The grave colonel bent quite tenderly over the old lady. "Can it be that your husband was the grand old man of whom I spoke? If so, tell me, how came it that, among all the Bourbon adherents whose faithfulness was rewarded, his name was unheard?"

No answer. Madame de Aulnais knitted on—on; she was thinking.

Then she raised her head.

"We were very poor. He was very good to me—always—always. We lived in—in—London. His name was Gustave—dear Gustave. He was very good to me, I

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say. He died. Now he lies—Father Francesco will tell you where he lies—in—in—— Monsieur, pardon me"—great tears welled up to the dim eyes—"I fancy that my memory sometimes fails me."

Instantly the colonel changed the conversation.

"No matter," he said, lightly. "What a fine view you have from these windows, madame!"

"Very, monsieur."

But before he left the house, he learned from Henri de Montbrison the history of the d'Aulnais family. He made a resolve.

"Good night, madame," he said, holding the old lady's hand in his own; "you will hear of me again."

She smiled and nodded at him. "Take care of my knitting; see, it is entangled in your sword. A thousand thanks. Light the colonel downstairs, Lucille. Do you know your way, Monsieur le Colonel? The first turn to the right, past the *auberge*, leads into the Caledonian Road. Good night."

A few days after this, Colonel de Latour left Marseilles. A week or so later, Henri de Montbrison received a letter from him. This letter called forth a great deal of consultation between de Montbrison and his wife. The final result was that he set out for Paris.

"If nothing else gladden her, she will remember the ring; she will rejoice to see the ring. Remember, Henri, it was last heard of at a pawnbroker's named Sauer, in the Rue d'Autin, Paris."

These were Lucille's parting words to her husband. In a week's time he returned to Marseilles.

Madame d'Aulnais was in one of her brightest moods on the evening when he arrived.

He was especially attentive to her that night.

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"Mother, dear," he said, when, dinner being over, the family gathered in the little *salon;* "you don't ask me what I saw in Paris."

"What did you see, Henri?"

"Lay down that everlasting knitting, mother dear, and listen. I saw Colonel de Latour for one person. You recollect him, mother?"

She knitted steadily.

"Yes, you recollect him, mother"—a little anxiously—an officer in your husband's old regiment. He dined with us a short while back."

"I remember now, Henri. But you mentioned the colonel's name so suddenly that I had no time to think."

"He spoke to you, mother, you know"—Henri rose, and came quite close to Madame d'Aulnais—"of the poor requital which your husband's eminent services have received. I told him of your husband's charge to us, that those services should never be thrust on the notice of the great. His charge has been respected. But yet, among the officers of your husband's own regiment, an effort has been voluntarily made to pay at least some small tribute to Gustave d'Aulnais' memory."

Gustave! She caught that name and smiled, repeating it softly to herself—"Gustave!"

"They beg his widow to accept from them a life pension, offered in most respectful admiration of her husband's noble qualities."

Madame d'Aulnais laid down her knitting. She looked bewildered, uncomprehending, even a little alarmed.

"You understand me, mother?"

"I am not sure, Henri. You said——"

With distinct emphasis he repeated what he had said. Then Madame d'Aulnais smiled again, nodded, and

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resumed her work. She had not understood in the least.

She sat silent, working, and sometimes lifting her eyes to gaze over the sea—the sea on which Father Francesco had watched the boats pass for Civita Vecchia.

Henri, observing her, sighed to think that the recognition of her Gustave's greatness had come too late—too late to awaken within her any gladness or pride.

Lucille came in, singing, from the kitchen. She wore her coquettish apron and her fanciful shoes.

"Look, mother, at something which Henri has brought from Paris."

Nothing less than a diamond ring of antique pattern and great value.

Madame d'Aulnais started. She trembled under some strong emotion; she seized the ring, and looked closely at it. Then, weeping passionately, she pressed it to her lips.

Heaven knows what were the fancies which the sight of the ring called up in the confused brain. Heaven knows what portion fancy, what portion memory, had in the old woman's emotion.

Once more she was a girl—blooming, beautiful. The scene around her was not Marseilles, but a French chateau in Poitou. Gustave d'Aulnais sought her for his wife. A diamond ring was given her in betrothal—this very ring.

It happened, as we know, that some years after Gustave d'Aulnais' happy marriage, dire poverty visited him. The betrothal-ring found its way to a second-rate pawnbroker's in the Rue d'Autin, Paris. The wife herself took her treasure for sale; with her was a child, her daughter Lucille.

Lucille never forgot the scene—never forgot how bitterly her mother cried on the way home after the ring was sold.

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Whatever concerning the loss of her treasure Madame d'Aulnais had forgotten, she knew well that that ring had associations with Gustave and her own youth. Therefore, she was glad to wear it.

The pension granted to Madame d'Aulnais was more than ample for all her needs.

She passed her few remaining years in great comfort. De Montbrison and his wife were kindness itself to her. All the neighbours liked her. Madame la Générale herself, the fortunate possessor of the superabundant claret glasses and the Burgundy, delighted to pay her attentions.

Colonel de Latour came pretty frequently to Marseilles on business. He never omitted to call on the old French lady, whom he had so much admired on his first visit to the de Montbrisons. Madame d'Aulnais never knew him. Sometimes she took him for Henri's English half-brother, and addressed him as Sir Felix Hilton, making inquiries after Queenie, her daughter's former pupil. Once, in spite of the difference of dress—de Latour wore his uniform on all occasions—she supposed him to be Father Francesco. But she was always polite, always glad to see him.

As time passed on, there came days when the old lady did not recognise even Henri; but there was one name which, to the end, had power to call a smile to her face—the name of Gustave. She never forgot that—never.

It was the last name which her lips pronounced before they closed in eternal silence.

Not for many years were the officers of d'Aulnais' regiment called upon to pay their pension to their old comrade's widow.

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CHAP. XX.—GONE HOME.

ALICE married the professor.

The wedding took place from the Hendersons' lodgings at Dynton, for Alice refused to return home.

The affair was a gay one enough. Sir Felix and Lady Hilton were present at the marriage. With them came their daughter, Maude—otherwise Queenie—the child to whom first Virginie Tonais and then Lucille d'Aulnais gave lessons. But Queenie was a child no longer. From a girl of eleven she had changed into a young lady of sixteen—a decidedly pretty young lady, and decidedly conscious of her prettiness.

Queenie Hilton and Cissy Henderson were bridesmaids. Their dresses were faultless, having been designed by Lady Hilton, and executed by a French milliner.

Lady Hilton took Alice's costume also in hand, and the child—it is difficult to think of her as anything but child—looked her very best on her wedding day.

Fred Henderson, who was groomsman at the wedding, admired Queenie vastly. Fred did not play the part of dejected lover, I can assure you. If Alice chose to prefer Mr. Garnet to a younger and wealthier husband—well, Fred was sorry for her—so he said.

"There are better fish in the sea than any that ever

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came out of it," he remarked to his sister Cissy, in reference to his rejection by Alice.

But Cissy, who idolised Alice, answered her brother pertly, by quoting another proverb—one regarding sour grapes.

Fred Henderson admired Queenie, as I have said. I do not know whether, at Dynton, he expressed to the lady his admiration or not, but I do know that two years afterwards he married her—married her with Sir Felix's full approval, for Sir Felix was a dear lover of money, and the Hendersons, with whom his daughter's marriage connected him, were yearly increasing their large income.

Mrs. Fred Henderson became, in after years, quite the fashion in London; and I have been told that her parties were, one season, more popular than any others given in town.

Henri de Montbrison, with his wife, was visiting his half-brother, Sir Felix Hilton, when the invitation to Alice Dashwood's wedding arrived. Perfect reconciliation had taken place between the brothers. Worldly affairs with the de Montbrisons had much improved. The stir which Colonel de Latour had made in Gustave d'Aulnais' old regiment travelled far and wide. At length, recognition of Gustave d'Aulnais' services came from the quarter whence that recognition was due. Honours were heaped on d'Aulnais' only child, Lucille.

Lucille was rich now. But I doubt whether she was really happier than in the days of her poverty. She had borne her reverses, as only a Frenchwoman can bear reverses, with light heart and unfaltering hope after better things.

Both Monsieur and Madame de Montbrison accompanied the Hiltons to Dynton. Lucille's sprightliness

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added much to the wedding's gaiety. Henri, too, was geniality itself.

Tubal Jones, the curate whom Alice had liked at Dodderley, came all the way from his home among the Welsh hills to perform the marriage ceremony.

When the service was over, a movement was heard from the end of the church. A veiled stranger came forward.

Stranger! no. She threw up her veil, and stood confessed as Phœbe Weston—I beg her pardon, Phœbe Dashwood. She had come here privately, to see the wedding. She begged leave to wish the bride all happiness. Almost humbly she made her request. Then a shuffling step was heard, and old Mr. Dashwood—a little shame-faced in appearance—joined his wife.

Alice hesitated a moment, just a moment, then she threw her arms round her father's neck.

Presently she turned to Phœbe. She kissed her—not very cordially, certainly, still she did kiss her.

Then the whole party left the church.

What a success was the wedding breakfast! How old Mr. Dashwood proposed the health of the bride; how Fred Henderson gave the toast of the bridesmaids, and Tubal Jones responded; how gracious was Lady Hilton; how entertaining Lucille, I lack time to tell.

After a month's wandering among the English Lakes, Mr. Garnet took his wife home—home to a vicarage standing among the Lincolnshire fens. A college living, a fat college living, had been presented to him in Lincolnshire—county famous for the fattest of fat incumbencies. Alice's new home was substantial and comfortable—not pretty in the least degree. The country round was flat as a plate. Green trees and hedges were rare; dreary

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ague-haunted marshes lay all around. Eight miles away rolled the North Sea.

Alice had great capacity for happiness, a gift for discovering, at first sight, the best side in every scene. Here, in this desolate Lincolnshire fen, where dwelling-places were few and far between, where natural beauties existed not, and tedium appeared, to the unprejudiced observer, to reign with absolute power, she contrived to make for herself a very happy home.

"I rather like this low-lying marsh land; don't you, old Gay?" she said. "What a wild, weird character it has! But perhaps to you, who have been used to university life, the place seems at first a little dull. How good it was of you to leave your dear old Oxbridge for me!"

Within doors all was bright and cheery. Especially the professor's study was a model of comfort. Alice took care that this room should be the most luxurious in all the house. Scarlet curtains hung in thick, warm folds around the walls; monstrous fires blazed in the grate.

Here, in long winter evenings, the professor sat to write his sermons—masterly, scholarly sermons, which were Alice's pride. Here Alice sat and worked for company's sake. She knitted endless mittens and shawls for almshouse widows; she produced the brightest of comforters for the village school-children. And Gay paused often in the composition of his sermons, to look up and smile at her, as she bent over her tasks. Very bright were Alice's answering smiles.

Above the mantelpiece hung a miniature, brought from the Oxbridge study—a miniature of Gay's young sister, over whose grave in the Essex churchyard her myrtle-tree cast its tiny shade. Near the miniature was an unframed print of a girl's face—the print in which the pro-

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fessor's fancy traced, in Oxbridge, a likeness to Alice Dashwood.

Alice made a very popular clergyman's wife. All her husband's parishioners—farmers or labouring folk—liked her much. With the farmers' wives she, on set occasions, drank tea. These dames displayed their best crockery and dresses in Alice's honour. Alice chatted with the farmers, and displayed vast ignorance of agriculture, in näive little remarks on crops and fallows.

To the newly-married pair came, by-and-by, a letter from Father Francesco. None of the scorn of which Alice accused the priest in his dealings with her was manifest here.

"May the one God, in whom we all believe, though our worship takes different forms, bless you both," wrote the priest.

He went on to speak of his Palestine pilgrimage, then very quickly to be made. He little dreamed that to Alice he owed the power to make it. The de Montbrisons no longer needed pecuniary assistance; but since good fortune came to them, they had had so many long arrears to settle, that the priest's loan to them was not yet repaid. "I am"—so continued Father Francesco's letter—"to spend Easter at Jerusalem. Afterwards I hope to enter on clerical duty in Germany. My work in England—for the present at least—is over. Should the result of my wandering life be a lasting separation between you and me, I still beg you to accept the assurance that I shall hold you both ever in affectionate remembrance. Believe me when I say that the tidings of your happy marriage has given me happiness as true as I have ever felt in all my life.—I am, your friend,

"FRANCESCO."

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Easter came in time.

Among scenes, along roads, where the first apostles of the faith came and went, where the earliest martyrs laid down their lives as witnesses; among scenes, along roads, where a greater than the apostles wrought His daily work, or, wearied with long journeying, sat awhile to rest; among the scenes where the grandest of all lives was lived, where the grandest of all deaths was died, the priest wandered, contemplative, reverent.

He visited the Garden of Gethsemane. Oh! the memories with which the very name of that garden fills the hearts of men—will fill them to the end of time. The priest's taste—a taste so correct, that not even the Roman Church had had power to corrupt it—was pained here. "The garden is in the possession of the Latins, who, with execrable taste, have walled it in, planted it with flowers, and made a show-place of it."

The priest passed many hours in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. "This church is an immense series of buildings under one roof. It contains not only the sepulchre, but Calvary, and many other places. In it, Greeks, Romans, Syrians, Coptics, all have possession.

"Here is the Chapel of Sorrow, the place where Mary wept after the crucifixion.

"Here is another chapel, containing the supposed spot where Mary Magdalene stood, when she believed the Saviour to be a gardener, until He said to her, 'Mary,' and she answered Him, 'Rabboni.'

"Only think," says a modern writer, whose work I am quoting, "of that touchingly exquisite scene located in a *chapel!*"

"Candlelight gleams everywhere in the church; gorgeous silver lamps hang all around." Perhaps, to Father

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Francesco — Romanist priest though he was — it was refreshing, as it was to the traveller whose words I borrow, "to leave the candlelight to pass into the open air to see the glorious eastern sky, which the great Redeemer must have so often gazed upon." Perhaps, to the priest, "the words from angel lips" came with a rebuke, and yet with a new sense not easily forgotten—

"He is not here; He is risen. Why seek ye the living among the dead?"

The priest visited Bethlehem—visited Kedron. He ascended the Mount of Olives; and remembering who, long before him, toiled up its steep side, weeping as He went, the priest wept too—wept tears of no transient emotion.

His time in Palestine came to an end.

One bright Sunday morning he started on his homeward journey; he set sail from Jaffa, "Jaffa the beautiful," the "Joppa" of Scripture.

We join him on the deck of a vessel bound for Naples.

On board were among the passengers a party of Russian pilgrims, with an old Greek priest. Beside these pilgrims were two others. They were young men, Romanists and Italians. From the constant laughter, and the gay manner of these young men, it might be presumed that they have regarded their pilgrimage rather as an entertaining excursion than a religious act. One of them the priest recognised at first sight—recognised with no small surprise and emotion. He was Antonio del Palmello.

Antonio! A rush of recollections, of confused thoughts, came across the priest's mind as Antonio's handsome face presented itself before him.

Antonio, in appearance at least, was unchanged. His handsome face wore its old careless expression; but his

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smile, when he did smile, was so gay and sunny that it was a pleasant sight to see.

"No wonder that Virginie loved him," often thought the priest.

What should Father Francesco say to Antonio? Could he trust his voice to ask after Virginie, to speak her name, unspoken through these years, or breathed only in solitude? Hitherto he had kept aloof from Roman friends, Franz Kaiserling only excepted.

For some time the priest avoided Antonio. But on the afternoon of which we see him on the deck, he has made up his mind to overcome his reluctance; he will enter into conversation with the young marchese.

He approached. Antonio, dressed in his scarlet uniform of the Papal Noble Guard, was leaning over the vessel's side; he talked with his travelling companion, who was also a member of the Guard. This companion was the officer whom we knew in bygone days as Antonio's friend, the same friend who first suggested to the young man the fact of Lina von Podewils' love.

Scampering towards Antonio, and pushing past the priest, came a little girl, the daughter of a Russian lady on board. . . .

With Antonio the child had already made acquaintance. Seeing her, he stretched out his arms.

"Advance, then, my little one," he said in French. "Let us see whether sweetmeats grow in these pockets of mine."

He lifted her in his arms. He reared himself to his full height, and placed the child on his shoulder.

"What age art thou, darling?"

"I am three years old."

"Three! Yonder, in Rome"—he pointed over the

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Mediterranean—pointed to where, across the sea, the town of Naples was already visible—"I have a little daughter, a child of your age, a child whose fair hair and soft eyes are like your own, pretty one." He kissed the little Russian—kissed her in remembrance of his daughter at home.

"A child!" The priest heard the words.

Virginie's child! Virginie's and Antonio's!

He turned away one moment to conceal some emotion which was visible on his face. "God bless the little child," he said to himself, slowly and solemnly.

Then he came forward.

"Have you quite forgotten me, Signor Marchese?"

"No need for the retention of Antonio's old anger towards me," he thought. "Virginie's conversion, which he once supposed to be, through my shortcoming, hopeless, is a realised fact, after all."

Antonio stared. "I beg your pardon. I do not remember—ah, yes!" with a change of voice, and a sudden burst of recognition; "you are Father Francesco."

The priest bowed.

"We have lost sight of you for ages—ages. How is it that you never come to Rome? I am charmed to see you, father—charmed."

With gusto he took the priest by both his hands.

"You are very good."

"Sit down here, will you, father? My wife will be delighted to hear of this meeting. So will my mother. My mother never ceases to regret your absence from Rome. The fame which you have acquired—which you were sure to acquire—in heretical countries has reached us, father."

Again the priest bowed. He had lost his aptness in reply.

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"The marchesa, your mother, is well, my son?"

"Quite well."

"And the signora, your wife?" He has spoken the words which have all along been uppermost in his mind—has spoken them quite calmly. But his heart beats quickly as he waits for a reply.

"Quite well too when I left home."

"I heard you mention a moment ago, my son"—the priest glanced towards the Russian child, who had scampered away again—"that you have a little daughter."

"Yes."

"What is the child's name?"

"Virginie."

Virginie! Father Francesco started. Ah! there was power in the sound of the name to agitate him visibly.

His embarrassment was so evident, that Antonio looked up in surprise.

Then there was silence.

"How beautiful the town of Naples is, glittering across the bay!" said Antonio, pointing to where a white line shone out in the distance over the sea.

"Very beautiful!" echoed the priest, absently.

. . . . . .

A few hours later, and in the town of Naples was a frantic hurrying to and fro. Fishermen gathered in knots upon the shore; they talked volubly, and with abundant Italian gesticulation; they pointed over the sea.

Fishermen's wives were there; they screamed shrilly; they called on the saints for help in an hour of disaster; they too pointed over the sea.

"A ship on fire!" they cried, one to another. "The saints have mercy! A ship on fire!"

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Who knows the consternation of an awful hour, when suddenly, suddenly the choice between two terrible deaths presents itself before men and women, in whose veins flows, warm and swift, the tide of life?

God's pity on you and me, reader, in such hour, if for you and me such hour shall dawn.

Rushing and flaring, wild flames tore up the gallant ship, on board which were Father Francesco, were Antonio del Palmello, were numbers of terror-stricken souls. The cause of the fire was unknown; not a moment had been found for inquiry into that cause.

Father Francesco stood on deck. His calm voice was heard directing, counselling. Among a crowd maddened by the most overwhelming of all fears—the fear of death—he preserved presence of mind. The crew were lowering boats. Boats were leaving the Naples shore. Land had long been in sight.

A frantic rush was made for the boats. Antonio del Palmello's composure was perfect as the priest's. All through his life his courage — a dare-devil, reckless courage—has stood him in good stead; it stood him in good stead now. His eyes were on the little Russian girl with whom he had played not many hours before. From her his gaze travelled rapidly along the crowded deck; it stopped at Father Francesco. Immediately he recognised in the priest the only man beside himself whose power to think and act was unimpaired by a wild dread. "We must save the child," he said, shortly, to the priest, who inclined his head in answer.

Antonio threw away a cigar which, till that moment, he had been placidly smoking. He took the child in his arms, and fought his way to the vessel's side, from whence boats were lowered.

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"Keep the way!" he shouted, in stentorian voice, to the priest.

"Give place to the child!" he called, in vigorous Italian, and with a fierce oath, to a Neapolitan trader who was clearing for himself a path to the boats. A violent blow added force to Antonio's words.

Men and women gave way before him. He deposited his precious burden. The child was saved.

And now the tumult which reigned—the mad, sickening fight to be first—baffles description. Blasphemous oaths mingled with agonised cries.

But at length, aided by the patient superintendence of the priest, where superintendence was possible, all the passengers had left the burning ship in time for safety—all but two persons, Antonio and the priest. There was room for one, only one, in a boat just putting off.

A few more minutes, and the ship would be a blackened wreck.

Antonio's hand was on the priest's shoulder. His voice never once faltered.

"Now, man. No time to be lost."

"I remain here. Take your place in the boat." The priest crossed his hands upon his breast. Very resolute was the look with which he confronted Antonio.

"*You* remain! *you*, with your Church's work to do! *you*, with the power to do your work nobly! I can be better spared—better a thousand times—than you."

"Shame! shame!" Never to his dying day did Antonio forget the indignation in the priest's voice. "You have a wife to weep over your loss; you have a little child to mourn you dead. Do you dare forget those dear ones?"

Time for discussion there was none. With a new,

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fierce strength, born of urgent need, the priest raised Antonio bodily in his arms. Stooping over the vessel, he dropped his burden into the boat. Before Antonio recovered his surprise, the boat pushed off.

"For your wife's sake—for Virginie's dear sake," cried the priest, in a low, hoarse whisper, as he relinquished his hold, "I give you your life. To her that life is precious. Tell Virginie—I may own the truth, now that death is near me—that love for her has been the one passion of my life. I love her to the end."

He saw Antonio start forward—saw a look of amazed intelligence gleam in his eyes. He saw no more; a thick cloud of smoke obscured his vision.

Death was near him—death. And, not four hours before, he was talking idly with Antonio—was receiving complimentary congratulations on the success of his London mission—was asking trivial questions about Roman acquaintances.

Death! death! He murmured the word to himself twice, in his effort to grasp its meaning.

Not that he had any fear—none. But at that moment it was difficult for him to realise his position. He was so young, so strong—an hour ago a long life of usefulness seemed stretched out before him.

"Antonio is safe!" he murmured, and a triumphant smile lighted his pale face.

He would die right willingly, since by his death he dreamed that he rescued from peril of death the being dearer to his Virginie than all the world beside.

Flames played hot and fierce around him. Their scorching breath warned him that the end drew near.

In a few short minutes he lived over again his whole life.

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Once more he is a boy in Switzerland; the giant Alps tower above him; the mountain air kisses his cheek.

Once more he is a young man, new to the priesthood; with ambitious yearnings, with burning zeal, he enters Rome.

Once more he takes his flight from the Eternal City. Darkness is gathering round him. Kneeling on the Campagna, he pays his parting salutation to the capital of Christendom.

"I salute thee, oh holy Rome!—Rome venerable through the blood and the tombs of the martyrs."

Once more he is toiling in London—failing often, hoping ever.

Once more he is in Dynton Church. He looks over tablets, raised in memory of drowned mariners—looks with a new light as to the cause of those tablets' interest for him.

Once more he is in Southern France. He hears the waves dash on the Marseilles shore. And, lo! he understands at last the message which they deliver as they break.

Most vivid in his memory was the time which he passed in Rome. He recalled a Christmas Eve, long ago, when, in his little Roman church, Virginie brought him berries for an evergreen cross, to adorn the wall beside his pulpit.

From his breast he drew a case, set with jewels. He took therefrom an evergreen cross—ah! the same cross, the very same. Its leaves were faded; its clustering berries black and shrivelled.

He kissed the cross.

"Farewell, my Virginie!" he said, simply.

"My Virginie!" No thought of priestly vows need rob his voice now of its pathos or its tenderness, as he dwelt on those soft words.

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The cross was returned to his breast.

Standing erect, he turned his face to the wide sky, as to the great Dispenser of life and death he murmured his last prayer.

Another moment — he was struggling among deep waters.

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Morning dawns on Naples—a fresh, brilliant morning. Calm are the waters of the lovely bay. In the sunlight the towns gleam white and clear; and "overhead broods, like one great smile of God, the everlasting blue."

The priest looks not on the glorious scene. His eyes are closed to earthly beauty. He has gone home to God.

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CHAP. XXI.—FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH.

"AFTER life's fitful fever, sleep well."

The priest sleeps well—his work ended, his disappointments over, his great reward gained.

Twenty years went by—twenty long years. In the Lincolnshire vicarage noisy children play, making the old walls echo with the sound of gay laughter. And Alice—as true a child as any of the party—plays and makes riot with the merriest there. Mr. Garnet has never faltered in his admiration for his young wife; Alice is dearer even now to him than she was in the old days when, in Oxbridge, sighing for her companionship and love, he told himself sternly that he sighed for the moon.

Mr. Garnet has sons to carry down his name, with honour, to future generations. His eldest son, a lad of much promise, has won so many school prizes and school distinctions, that his father proudly anticipates for him a future marked by the dignity which high scholarship confers.

The lad's name is Francis. He is now eighteen years of age; he has just entered on college life. In course of years a great wish of his own is to be gratified—he is to become a clergyman. Before he leaves home, his father speaks to him thus:—

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"You have chosen for yourself your profession—have chosen, to my thinking, the noblest of professions. A clergyman's duty is no light one; try your best, my boy, when that duty shall become yours, to do it thoroughly. You are named Francis—so named after a dear friend of your mother's and—and—of my own; a dear friend, who died shortly before your birth. He was a servant of a great Church—was a hard worker, a deep thinker; he was the grandest preacher to whom it has ever been my happiness to listen. I hope that you may live to resemble your namesake, boy."

The lad lifts to Mr. Garnet a pair of great soft eyes—his mother's eyes.

"I'll try, father," he says, in frank, clear voice—his mother's voice.

Alice, who is standing near, lays one hand lovingly on her son's shoulder—she is obliged to reach high to do so—her other hand is in her husband's; her eyes seek Gay's, approvingly.

Alice has not forgotten Father Francesco. Looking back calmly, now, on his long avoidance of her, she can recognise its cause. With recognition comes gratitude. Her remembrance of the priest is free from bitterness. More—her remembrance of him is infinitely tender.

Alice has never again entered the Hammersmith chapel. The chapel is less frequented than it formerly was. Serving in Father Francesco's place is an Irish priest—a Father Bryne. Like many Irish priests, he had been educated in France—had been a student at St. Omer. But he does little credit to his education; he appears perfectly illiterate. In appearance he is unprepossessing; he is short and thick-set; his principal characteristics are dirt and untidiness.

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Within the chapel hangs a tablet to the memory of Father Francesco.

It is erected "In loving memory of an esteemed friend;" so its inscription—written in English—says. It tells, in simple words, of Father Francesco's services in Italy, Switzerland, Southern France, and England, and of his premature death in the Bay of Naples.

Then come appropriate words, taken from Scripture—"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee."

"A heretic undertook the cost of this monument," triumphantly boasts the sacristan to visitors—"a heretic, who, in spite of his rejection of the one true creed, could not withhold his admiration from a priest of the true Church. This priest, Father Francesco—I remember him quite well—held office in our chapel twenty years ago."

The "heretic" is Mr. Garnet. Whether or not Mr. Garnet's appreciation of Father Francesco's high qualities reflects honour upon himself as well as upon the priest, the sacristan does not pause to consider.

But there the monument hangs. The old blind organist—very old now—knows its place, knows what words it bears, though he has never seen it. Every day he passes it as he totters to his organ-loft. Often he stands under the tablet, while he waits for Father Bryne to enter the church for matins or vespers.

"Father Francesco was a lover of music," he says to himself. "How exquisitely he chanted the service!" Tender regret is in the old organist's heart. Father Bryne's voice—coarse, guttural, utterly unmusical—is painful to the old man's ear. His finger wanders over the tablet.

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"In loving remembrance of an esteemed friend," he murmurs to himself.

Father Bryne comes bustling up.

"By the Vargin! it's late we are," he calls, as he hurries to the sacristy. And the organist deserts his post, and toils up to the organ gallery.

Not here is Father Francesco's resting-place.

One morning, twenty years ago, a Neapolitan fisherman discovered, washed upon the Naples shore, the body of a drowned man. A smile was on the face—a face so lovely in its death-sleep, that a strange awe seized the fisherman as he gazed upon it. He crossed himself, and faltered out a prayer for all drowning souls.

The body was recognised by the Marchese Antonio del Palmello. The marchese was in Naples; he had been, the night before, saved from the wreck of a burning ship. This drowned man had also been a passenger on board the ship. He was a priest—Father Francesco.

The marchese ordered the removal of the body to Rome. He made the funeral his own charge.

And so it comes to pass, after all, that the priest rests under the shadow of old Rome—the Rome which, even in his desertion of it, he loved with soul and strength.

At nightfall a sad procession of *becchini* and *frati* passed along the narrow, gloomy Roman streets. The priest was carried to his home in his own Roman church.

He lies beneath the altar where he has celebrated mass; lies near the pulpit from which he has preached.

Father Francesco's sudden death made a great sensation in Rome. Tidings of his successful work in other countries had, from time to time, reached the Eternal City. Had he lived but one year longer, he would have been made a *monsignore* of the Church. Speculations as

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to the fame which he might have gained as successively bishop, archbishop, and cardinal, were rife among churchmen in Rome.

One old *monsignore*, discussing events which "might have been," did not hesitate to mention Father Francesco's name in connection with the Papal throne itself.

"Our departed brother was a man of rare eloquence," said old Cardinal Gardini, as, vespers being over, he sauntered with a number of clergy down St. Peter's one afternoon, not long after Father Francesco's funeral. "I remember a very remarkable sermon which he preached in the Church of Sant 'Agnese, in Piazza Navona, on one festival of Saint Agnes. The sermon—all in praise of the saint's meekness and spotless purity—was marvellously effective. 'This man,' thought I, as I heard the priest preach, 'is destined to fill a very high position in the Church.'"

"He led an irreproachable life while he was in Rome," said corpulent, good-humoured Cardinal Mardi; "he was a man of no vices—no vices!" The cardinal rubbed his hands together complacently.

"No vices!" Cardinal Gardini winked wickedly, incredulously. He knew well that to very few priests of his acquaintance could Cardinal Mardi's tribute be justly paid.

As time wears on, Father Francesco's name is less and less frequently heard in Rome. Now that twenty years have rolled by, it is scarcely ever mentioned.

Franz Kaiserling long mourned his friend, Father Francesco. Franz has grown to man's estate. His health is delicate as ever; it occasions much anxiety to his friend, Hester Kimberley. Franz's home is now in a remote New England village. He has given himself no trouble to learn the language of the country in which he

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lives. The peculiarities of the German, Italian, and American accents are combined in what little English he deigns to speak.

In the village he is known as "the foreign gentleman," *par excellence.* In spite of his singularities, he is a general favourite. "The foreign gentleman" receives special curtseys from the school-children, special greetings from the villagers, special bows and smiles from the parish clergyman.

Franz is still a Roman Catholic. At the nearest Romanist chapel—a chapel some five miles distant from his home—Franz's deformed figure, Franz's pale, spiritual face, are constantly to be seen.

Upon Karl's grave, at Waterloo, grass waves, long and green. In one constant heart Karl's memory never dies. Franz fondly cherishes the recollection of the brother whom, in boyhood, he worshipped with passionate hero worship.

. . . . . .

The evening of All Souls' Day. Rome. Twenty years after Father Francesco's death.

The streets were filled with stalls bearing *immortelles*, wreaths and crosses. The stalls were lighted—for evening shades were deepening, and the short autumn day drew to a close—with rows of candles. Here and there a pan of grease, with a wisp of tow for a wick, was to be seen. Flames blazed and flared about, casting their light on the wreaths and crosses, and enabling passers-by to read at a glance the inscriptions which those wreaths and crosses bore. Pathetic in their very simplicity were the inscriptions—"To my mother," "To my brother," "To my dear friend."

A touching custom this, which took crowds of Romans

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on that day to God's Acre—a custom which bids them set apart All Souls' Day for visiting the resting-places of their dear dead, for laying upon graves tokens of love which survives separation.

Round the stalls were heard the din of voices, the burr and buzz of a bargaining crowd. Be their purchases what they may, Romans must always bargain.

A lady, accompanied by a servant, approached one of the stalls. The stall's proprietress—a hideous old Roman peasant woman—rose with unusual alacrity.

"It is the Marchesa del Palmello, wife of the great Marchese Antonio del Palmello," she whispered to a young girl, who stood near, and whose office was to assist her in her business.

The marchesa wore elaborate evening costume. Over her dress, partially over her head, she had thrown a thick shawl. In her hair diamonds flashed and gleamed. Her carriage waited for her at the corner of the street. She was on her road to a large evening reception, but came a few yards out of her way to make a purchase, and to carry it to its destination.

"What will the Signora Marchesa be pleased to buy?"

The "Signora Marchesa" took up a wreath of yellow and black *immortelles*. She laid upon the stall in place of the wreath a silver coin.

Taking into consideration the fact that in Rome there are upwards of three hundred churches, it is, perhaps, superfluous to say that a church was to be seen in this street. Streets without churches are few and far between.

This church was a sombre building, ugly and small. A flight of dirty, worn stone steps led to the porch. On

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the steps were more flaring tallow candles, more wreaths, more purchasers. Here a crippled beggar rattled a tin alms-box before every person who mounted the steps; there an unkempt child, with glorious black eyes and tangled, curling brown hair, stretched out a dirty hand, and, in shrill voice, solicited charity.

The marchesa daintily picked her way through the throng. She ascended the steps. The curtain before the church door was lifted for her; she passed in.

It was Father Francesco's old church.

The marchesa crossed herself, bent before the high altar; then, rather hurriedly, she made her way to a tomb near the pulpit. The tomb bore a Latin inscription—a long eulogistic inscription—to the memory of "Father Francesco—family name, Henri Borel—sometime priest of this church." Upon the tomb the marchesa laid her wreath. Every All Souls' Day, for twenty years, Antonio's wife had placed thus on the grave of Antonio's preserver a token of undying gratitude.

The marchesa lingered a few minutes in the church. She said a prayer for the repose of the priest's soul. Then, with another reverence before the high altar, and another hurried sign of the cross, she made her way into the street.

Her diamonds glittered; the light of the stalls streamed upon them as she came out from the gloomy church; street beggars made a rush upon her. Her servant cleared a passage through the crowd.

When she reached her carriage, Antonio sprang from it. Antonio was broader, stouter—he was twenty years older than when we last saw him; but he was still very handsome.

"We are a little late," he said, in his rich, pleasant

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voice. "Old Cardinal Prospero has passed while I have been waiting here. And my mother has gone by—and—and all Rome, I think. Jump in, Lina; make haste."

Lina!

Look now at the lady's face, as she throws her shawl back from her head—a proud face, with flashing grey eyes! Lina's face—Lina, whom we knew as the Fraulein von Podewils—now Marchesa del Palmello.

It was Lina von Podewils whom Hester Kimberley saw kneeling with Antonio before the altar in the Borghese chapel of the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore, on the Snow Madonna's fête day. For Lina the bells had rung, the marriage music had sounded—not for Virginie—never for Virginie. Bridal myrtle has bloomed for Lina; the cypress waves for Virginie.

Evening shades fall thicker.

Along the pavement of Father Francesco's church feeble lamplight is flickering.

One or two persons are engaged in private prayer in the church. The rattle of rosaries is heard.

Bending over Father Francesco's tomb is now a black-robed figure. Upon the ground near are some cypress branches and a number of fresh white roses.

It is Virginie Tonais' face which stoops over the flowers—Virginie's face, with its golden hair grown grey, and its sweet eyes dimmed and faded.

When last we saw Virginie, she was standing in the Strangers' Cemetery, beyond the walls of Rome. We find her as we left her, beside a grave.

Virginie is still a heretic—a Protestant—what you will. The faith which her Huguenot ancestors held with passionate tenacity is her faith.

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Lady Hilton's story—told long since in Dynton to Father Francesco—of Virginie's journey from Brussels to Rome, in order that, in the capital of Roman Catholicism, she might ask admission into the Roman Catholic Church, was a true story; but after Virginie had once left Brussels, Lady Hilton lost sight of her. Now it had happened that, when Rome was actually reached, Virginie's new-born determination had given way. Was it a fresh sight of the Strangers' Cemetery, where rested the Protestant pastor, her father? the father who, in life and death, proclaimed his devotion to the pure faith bequeathed to him by fore-fathers who sealed belief with blood; was it a conviction that the truth was with her Church, and her Church only? Was it what it might which prompted her resolution, she determined to live and die a Protestant.

Once more she went from Rome; she took up her abode in Venice. There she now gains a scanty livelihood by teaching music. To-day, for the first time for more than a score of years, she is again in the Eternal City.

The whole truth respecting Father Francesco's death is known to her.

After Father Francesco's funeral, Antonio had sought Virginie—had found her in her poor Venetian home. And with many tears, with many of the exclamations of stormy regret with which southern natures speak their sympathy, he had given her the priest's dying message, "Love for Virginie has been the one passion of my life."

"Virginie! dear, dear Virginie!"—Antonio's eyes had sought Virginie's wistfully; his old love, his old longing had been for one moment visible in his face—"Father Francesco dreamed that you, Virginie—you, not Lina—

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were my—my—wife." Antonio's voice sank to a trembling whisper as he spoke the last word. "For my wife's sake, to spare her a life-long grief, to insure her a life-long joy, the priest gave me my life, at the cost of his own."

Antonio took his leave; not, however, before he had seen Virginie's face flush and brighten with a sudden surprise, a sudden wild joy.

Antonio lives to be as happy in his marriage as perhaps the generality of men are. If a memory of Virginie haunts his thoughts sometimes, he keeps those thoughts to himself. Lina makes him a devoted wife. In time, Antonio learns almost to forget that it was pity—not love—which induced him to bind her life to his. A year after his marriage a little daughter was born to Antonio; to this child he is fondly attached. By his special order she was named Virginie.

The tidings which Virginie had long ago received of Antonio's marriage with Lina had given her happiness, unmixed with any particle of jealousy. She had never returned Antonio's affection.

The constant love of Father Francesco's heart has been with constancy returned. Purely, hopelessly, Virginie has loved him all her life. It was not for Antonio's sake, but for the priest's sake, that Virginie ever longed to enter the Roman Church. "Would," she had said often to herself, when Father Francesco's entreaties sounded in her ears—"would that, for thy dear sake, I could bring myself to learn thy faith, to be in all things as thou art!"

The longing is quieted. The love lives on.

Faithful to the death art thou, brave heart of woman! Strong as death, silent as death is thy great love!

Evening wears on.

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Away in the Bay of Naples blue waves are flowing gently—waves upon whose bosom the priest had sunk to his last sleep. Moonlight illumines the sea, which is tranquil as a lake.

Into Father Francesco's church moonlight creeps too. It steals along the worn floor; it shines on the tomb raised to the memory of "Henri Borel, known as Father Francesco."

"Henri!" Virginie murmurs to herself the unfamiliar name.

Virginie's face is not old—will never be old. A soft bloom is on her cheeks, though her hair is prematurely grey. Her eyes have their old, patient look—her voice its tender, touching tone.

Dear Virginie, as I take my leave of you this night, a strange sadness seizes me. My pen moves reluctantly; it is a hard task to me to bid you farewell.

Dear Virginie, love has made all the sadness of your simple life. May love make your boundless happiness in the vast hereafter!

Virginie gathers her roses from the ground. She presses them to her breast, to her lips. Then, with gentle hand, she lays them upon the tomb.

Motionless she stands, her head downcast, her eyes upon the ground.

"He loved me—loved me—even me."

She thinks of the priest—thinks of the patient constancy of his love—thinks of the devotedness of his life—thinks of the heroism of his death.

"Twenty years!" she says softly to herself.

She is glad that twenty years have passed—glad that she is growing old, since the longer that she lives the faster approaches the day when she will see her love again.

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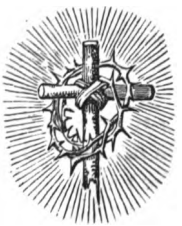
She kneels on the church floor; she kisses the tomb; she lays her cheek lovingly on the cold stone.

The weary look passes from her eyes; a smile lightens her face.

Her lips move. This is what she says:—

"We have waited long—very long. We surely can be patient to the end. In the bright heaven, where we shall surely meet, I think that we shall belong to each other, Henri!"



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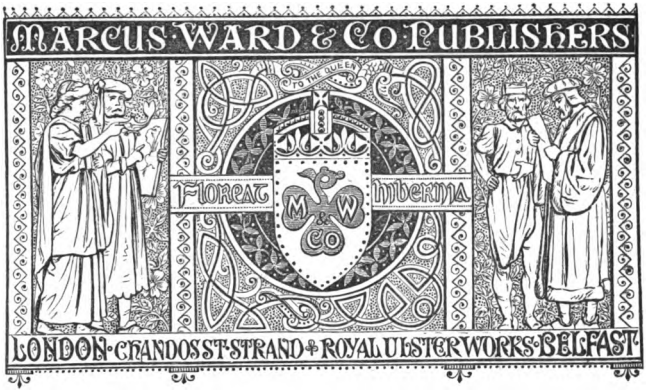

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